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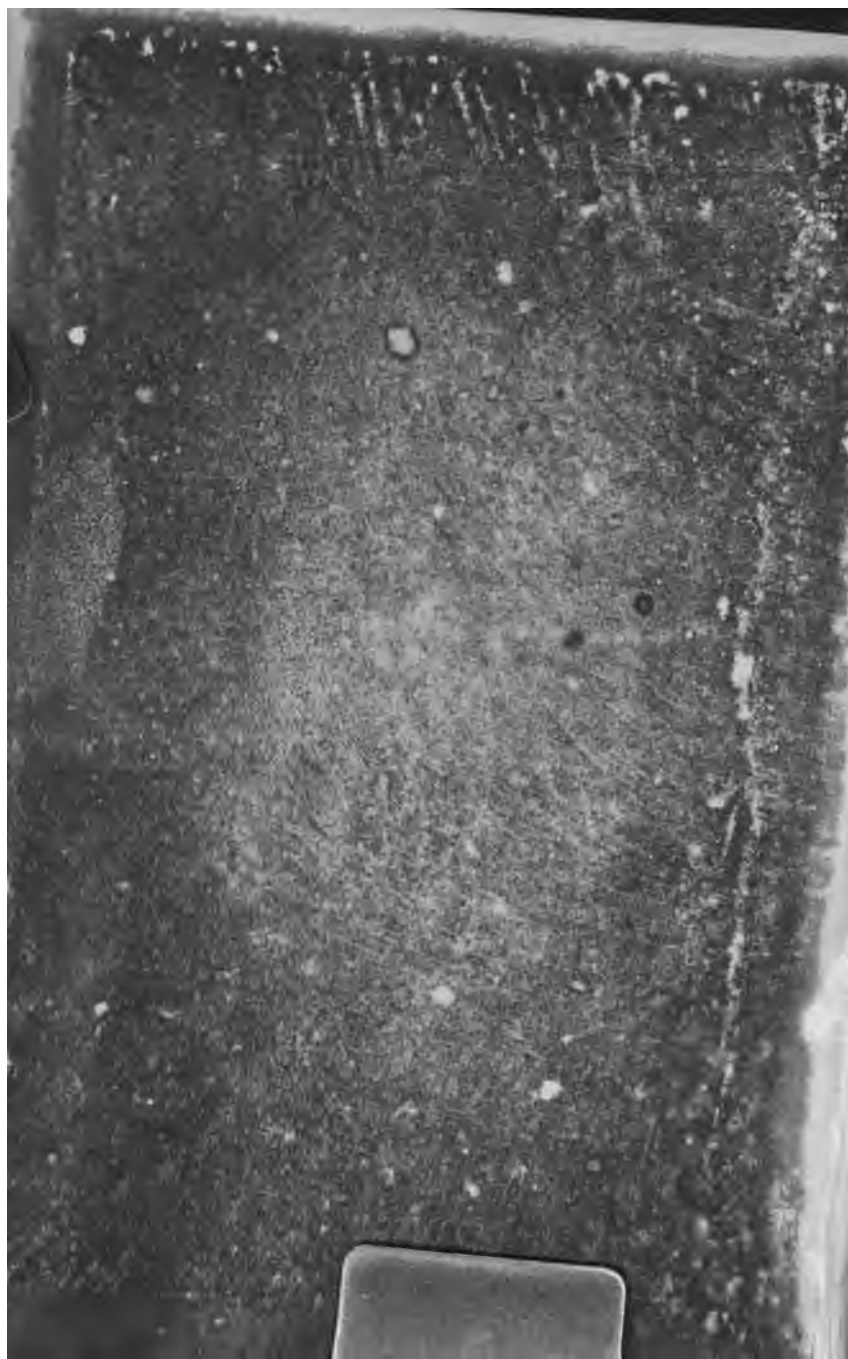
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EXPOSITION  
OF THE  
SERMON ON THE MOUNT,  
MATTHEW V-VII,

IN WHICH IT IS ATTEMPTED  
TO UNFOLD AND PRESENT OUR LORD'S DELINEATION AND  
ENFORCEMENT OF PERSONAL RIGHTEOUSNESS  
IN THAT DISCOURSE.

BY THE  
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## PREFACE.

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IN the Sermon on the Mount our Lord presents a singularly comprehensive and profound, though brief, view of personal righteousness, setting forth its distinctive character, the necessity of it, and the blessedness attached to it; and, in the following pages, it is attempted, in a series of chapters, to unfold and exhibit his teaching on this fundamental subject. If this attempt has been at all successful, the object to which it is directed must reflect some value upon the result.

In the detailed interpretation of the text, entire confidence has been placed in the language subjected to that process; and the course has been, accordingly, pursued of simply marking and estimating its own announcement of its meaning, without offering, on the one hand, officious exegetical aid, or ever resorting, on the other, to exegetical emendation or coercion. The language, however, has been regarded as deriving its significancy not wholly from the words employed, but also, and in some cases to a very great extent, from the scope and connection. A due regard to modifying

circumstances,—whether more general and implied in the scope, or more particular and immediate, and implied in the connection,—and a just appreciation of their influence, are in no case more necessary than in the exposition of the Sermon on the Mount; and they are, at the same time, sufficient to dissipate almost all the difficulty with which the exposition of it is attended.

The most careful investigation has led to the conviction, that structural parallelism, which unquestionably obtains to a very great extent in the Scriptures generally, obtains also in the portion of them which is under treatment in the following pages; and it is hoped that the recognition of this fact will be found to have contributed not inconsiderably to the definite and satisfactory development of the connection.

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# INTRODUCTION.

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## SECTION I.—OCCASION AND SCOPE OF THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT.

1. We should conclude *a priori*, and the conclusion is fully borne out by investigation, that the materials of the sermon on the mount, which originated, not in the questioning either of serious disciples or of captious opponents, but in our Lord's own estimate of the occasion, were selected in adaptation to the spiritual condition and tendencies, as brought into view at the time, of those to whom it was addressed. It is, therefore, of evident and no inconsiderable importance, as serving to guide and facilitate exposition, and will be interesting on general grounds, that we ascertain, as far as may be practicable, the particular aspect or peculiarity of their spiritual condition and tendencies, that *was* at the time brought into view, and that imparted its distinctive character to the case with which it was our Lord's immediate object to deal.

2. Fallen man is ever prone to reduce religion to a mere external thing,—a lifeless routine of forms and observances. From the constitution of his nature, and the relative position which he occupies, he must necessarily have a religion. He cannot assume or even affect an attitude of independence and self-sufficiency. At the same time, he is incapable of spiritual worship and averse from it; and hence, if his reli-

gion be not wholly without a ritual, in performing its services he will "stand without," neither entering nor desiring to enter into the most holy place in which the divine presence is manifested.

3. This tendency to rest in what is merely outward in religion is probably strengthened by the experience of other departments of human activity. In dealing with the objects and interests of time, outward performance alone is absolutely necessary. We use the proper means, and bring the proper causes into operation, and, ordinarily, irrespectively of the state of our spirits at the time, the desired result follows. From this experience of the efficacy of the outward application of means, the expectation naturally arises, or, arising otherwise, receives countenance and confirmation, that the outward application of means will be equally effectual within the sphere of religion.

4. As regards the Jews, the fact that the ceremonial observances of the economy under which they were placed, however formal, and though merely outward, and not at all animated with the spirit which it was their proper office to embody, secured, at least, exemption from the ceremonial evils to which the neglect of them would expose, exerted a still more powerful influence in the same direction. Those observances were a part of their religion; and, finding that some religious observances, though only outward, were not unavailing, they adopted in their blindness, and under the influence of their aversion from the spiritual, perhaps unconsciously, the pernicious belief that all religious observances are mere outward forms and bodily exercise,—a belief which impressed upon their whole worship a character of hypocrisy. —(Matt. xxiii. 23–27; vi. 2, 5, 16.)

5. And, as they excluded the spiritual from the *means*, they excluded it also from the *end*. Whatever expectation they had of the blessings of a future state, their really influential expectation was, that, in connection with their peculiar

religious privileges, and especially under the reign of the Messiah, they should attain to great temporal prosperity, in accordance with the promise of such prosperity made to obedience under the theocracy. It was under the influence of this expectation that the five thousand whom our Lord fed miraculously with five loaves and two small fishes, regarding him as the Messiah, and this miracle, it would appear, as the auspicious dawn of his bountiful bestowal of temporal blessings upon his subjects, would proceed at once, if they had not been prevented, to "make him a king."—(John vi. 15.) It was the consciousness of this expectation, as cherished by themselves, and of the design associated with it to cast off the Roman yoke, and recover their national independence, that suggested to those who procured his crucifixion the accusation that he "made himself a king," and thus "spoke against Cæsar."—(John xix. 12; Luke xxiii. 2.) And it was this expectation that, after his resurrection, dictated the question of the apostles, "Wilt thou at this time restore again the kingdom to Israel?"—(Acts i. 6.)

6. Carnal views of the Messiah's kingdom, and of the prospects of his subjects, might easily be regarded, by those who had adopted or were disposed to entertain them, as sanctioned or even conveyed by prophecy. By a literal interpretation of some predictions, and by antedating the fulfilment of others, they might obtain for them this support. And in the miracles of Christ, and the outward character of the benefits which they immediately served to impart, contemplated in the light which their own spirit shed upon them, they could see at once an incipient realization of such views, and a distinct intimation and assurance of the full realization of them, and of that realization as near at hand.—(John vi. 15.) And here it should be observed, that numerous miracles preceded the delivery of the sermon on the mount, and had attracted "great multitudes."—(Matt. iv. 23–25.)

7. On the grounds now indicated, it may be warrantably

concluded that, speaking generally, the spiritual condition and tendencies of those to whom the sermon was addressed were distinguished by these two peculiarities,—that in their religious services they were disposed to rest in what is outward, and that their desires and expectations pointed mainly, if not exclusively, to outward and temporal benefits; and it was in adaptation, we conceive, to those peculiarities that our Lord selected the materials and determined the entire character of his discourse. This view is fully borne out, and can scarcely fail to be reached, by a careful examination of the discourse itself. Such an examination will discover that each successive passage has a direct, and, as it appears, a designed bearing on the one peculiarity or the other, if not on both. The opening passage, which enunciates the *theme*, and therefore indicates the general character of the sermon (Matt. v. 3–10), has such a bearing on the first peculiarity, or the tendency to externalism, when it pronounces those blessed, and those only, who are distinguished by inward qualities and exercises,—the poor in spirit, those that mourn, the meek, the merciful, those that hunger and thirst after righteousness, the pure in heart; and on the second, or the carnality of the expectations with which they looked forward to the reign of the Messiah, both when it gives such a description of the character of those who are blessed, and when it represents the blessedness allotted to them as a blessedness adapted to their inward excellencies, their spiritual tastes, and their heavenly aspirations: They are “poor in spirit,” do not and cannot rest in any thing earthly, and “the kingdom of heaven is theirs;” they shall, indeed, “inherit the earth,” not, however, in an earthly spirit, but as “the meek;” “they hunger and thirst after righteousness,” and “they shall be filled” with the realization of righteousness and with its peaceable fruits; and to characterise and consummate all, they are “pure in heart,” and, being thus qualified for such a portion, “they shall see God.”

8. And throughout the *treatment*, or the body of the discourse, we still find the same twofold reference. The special vice of the righteousness of the scribes and pharisees was its outwardness; and our Lord warns his hearers that, if they would be subjects of his kingdom, their righteousness must exceed the righteousness of the scribes and pharisees (Matt. v. 20); that they must not only abstain from the outward acts of sin, but must also crucify the affections and lusts, from which they emanate and which they embody (ver. 21, 22, 27, 28); that they must cultivate the love which, existing as an inward principle, and passing into due outward manifestation, is "the fulfilling of the law" (ver. 43-48); and that in all things they must deal with their "Father which seeth in secret," having respect supremely to his will and his claims.—(vi. 1-18.) And he further requires that, while their obedience shall be the obedience of the heart, flowing forth from within, their desire and aim shall be to lay up for themselves treasures in heaven and not on earth; that they shall not serve mammon, but shall "seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness."—(Ver. 19, 20, 24-34.)

9. Such being the scope and immediate reference of the sermon, it could be addressed only to those who looked upon Jesus as about to establish the Messiah's kingdom, and who, therefore, had attached themselves to him more or less decidedly as his disciples, that, when he should establish it, they might participate in its benefits. It was only in dealing with such that it became specially appropriate and necessary to correct erroneous views respecting its benefits and the character of its subjects. Accordingly, Matthew (v. 1, 2) and Luke (vi. 20) distinctly inform us that it was to the disciples that the sermon on the mount was directly addressed.\* Others, indeed, were present as hearers (Luke vi. 17, vii. 1; Matt. vii. 28, 29), and, as might have been expected, were greatly

\* We here proceed upon the view of the discourse reported by Luke (vi. 20-49), which is maintained in Sect. iii.

impressed.—(Matt. vii. 28, 29.) Those facts, however, do not at all imply that they were directly addressed, and create, therefore, no necessity to modify or evade the plain and explicit statement of the two evangelists. Too many expositors display an unhappy ingenuity in surrounding themselves with difficulties, and then effecting their escape by more or less violently opening for themselves a path through the obstructing phraseology of Scripture. There is too little confiding simplicity in their treatment of the Word of God; instead of receiving its announcements with unsophisticated docility, they come to it with the requirement, that, in rendering to them its meaning, it fulfil certain conditions which they choose to impose upon it.

10. We have said that it was to such as had assumed, *more or less decidedly*, the relation of disciples to Jesus, that the sermon on the mount was directly addressed; but it may be thought that those to whom it was thus addressed were disciples in a stricter sense—disciples in spirit and in truth—seeing he says to them, “Ye are the salt of the earth, . . . ye are the light of the world.” This language, however, does not mean that they were such *actually*, but that they were such in the event supposed in the immediately preceding context, “When men shall revile you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you, falsely, for my sake” (ver. 11), or that they were such viewed as “his disciples.” Neither does the injunction, “Give not that which is holy unto the dogs,” imply that those who were addressed were officially entrusted with “that which is holy,” any more than the injunction, “Thou shalt not kill,” implies that those addressed are entrusted with the power of life and death; and, on the other hand, the reproof and admonition, “Thou hypocrite, first cast the beam out of thine own eye” (vii. 5), do not imply that those addressed were actually “hypocrites.” Our Lord pictures to himself a person who proceeded in the manner condemned (ver. 3, 4); and it is such a person that

he reproves for his hypocrisy, and admonishes in the terms just quoted.

SECTION II.—STRUCTURE OF THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT.

1. The interpreter, ordinarily, has not to deal with detached passages and propositions, but with passages and propositions in a certain connection, in the light of which they must be viewed that they may be correctly understood. Words and phrases detached from all connection, and swayed wholly by their own significancy, will point to a certain sense; and from this sense the connection often produces a greater or less variation, which must be estimated that the true interpretation may be ascertained. Attention to the connection is thus essential. But that the connection may be correctly and satisfactorily determined, it is often necessary to determine the structure of the entire composition or portion of a composition under treatment. This necessity arises with peculiar frequency, in the case of the Scriptures, from the prevalence of a structure which, to a great extent, substitutes for continuous connection, or blends with it, a connection between separated, it may be widely separated, but related members of what, in the particular case, forms a whole. This species of connection, and its dependence upon structure, may be illustrated from the following passage of the portion of Scripture under consideration—"Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine, lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you."\* Here, as regards the last clause, the connection is not continuous; for that clause does not refer to what immediately precedes, but presents the consideration by which the injunction in the first clause is enforced. It is not the swine, but the dogs, that might be expected to "turn again and rend you." The swine would

\* This is one of Bishop Jebb's illustrations of introverted parallelism.

not *proceed deliberately*, so to speak, to trample the pearls under their feet, but, wholly disregarding them, would give them this treatment *incidentally*. They could not, therefore, be said to “turn again,” for this representation would imply, that they had first concluded somewhat, to which, withdrawing for the purpose, they had, to use again this expression, *deliberately* applied themselves; and, besides, we cannot regard it as a representation in keeping with the habits of swine. But the picture is in all respects congruous when ravenous dogs are represented as first rushing to devour the sacrificial flesh given to them, and, having devoured it, turning again, and from ferocity, and the expectation of procuring more food, “rending” the giver. But, while it may be perceived that such a connection as has now been indicated obtains in a given passage, the existence of it will be reluctantly admitted, unless it be known that it is a natural result of a *method*, or a principle of arrangement, or a mode of structure of ascertained occurrence in the Scriptures. And, in multitudes of cases, it is only under the guidance of just views of structure that the actual connection can be at all discovered.

2. In investigating the structure of the sermon on the mount, it may be easily perceived that the first seven and the last four verses of it—v. 3–10, and vii. 24–27—are distinguished by a marked peculiarity, of which, however, I have not observed that any notice has been taken by expositors. While, in the rest of the discourse, our Lord speaks not only to but also of his hearers, using the second person—“Ye are the salt of the earth . . . ye have heard . . . take heed . . . seek ye . . . judge not . . . ask . . . enter ye”—in the verses which we have specified, still speaking to his hearers, he does not speak of them as such, but of all who bear a certain character; and he, accordingly, uses the third person—“Blessed are the poor in spirit,” &c.; “Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him,” &c. And, while the two extreme portions of the dis-

course have this common peculiarity of form, they are also parallel in meaning. In the first of them, our Lord, describing the righteous by different features of their character, pronounces them "blessed;" and, in the last of them, he again describes the character of the righteous, "Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them," and presents a striking illustration of their blessedness, "I will liken him unto a wise man," &c. When, at the beginning of the discourse, the righteous are pronounced blessed, it is implied that the unrighteous are cursed.—(Comp. Luke's Report, vi. 24–26). This implied fact is expressly declared in the concluding portion—"Every one that heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them not, shall be likened unto a foolish man," &c.—(vii. 26, 27). Thus the two portions are evidently parallel—distinguished from the rest of the discourse by a common peculiarity of form, and identical in meaning. They stand, however, in somewhat different relations to the body of the sermon. The one announces, as the subject of the sermon, the great truth that the righteous, and the righteous alone, are blessed; and, this truth having been illustrated, established, and enforced, the other re-states it, as the lesson taught to the hearers, and to which it deeply concerned them to give its proper practical influence over their hearts and their lives.

8. When it is declared that the righteous—that is, the righteous alone—are blessed (v. 3–10), the necessity of righteousness is implied. And, in the second member of the discourse (ver. 11–20), our Lord, after applying to his hearers, whom he now addresses in the second person, the declaration that the righteous are blessed, in terms fitted and doubtless designed to move and engage them to cultivate righteousness, and to persevere in the cultivation of it, to whatever evils they might in consequence be exposed (ver. 11, 12), proceeds to establish the implied assertion of the necessity of righteousness in the subjects of his kingdom. And he establishes

it on two grounds—the office assigned to the subjects of his kingdom, as “the salt of the earth” and “the light of the world,” an office which the righteous only can fulfil (ver. 13–16); and the continued, unimpaired, and indestructible authority of the law (ver. 17–20), which he came to “fulfil,” and not to “destroy.”

4. Of what follows, as we shall afterwards see, and indeed obviously, the aim is different, until we come to near the end of the discourse, when we again find the righteous pronounced blessed (vii. 21), and the necessity of righteousness asserted (ver. 22, 23). And, in addition to this correspondence in meaning, this latter passage *fits on* so exactly to the former, that it bears the appearance of the immediate continuation of it. The former passage concludes with the warning, “Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven” (v. 20); and this latter passage begins with a reiteration of this warning, in other and somewhat explanatory terms, which might very well form the next sentence, “Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord,” making a loud profession, like the pharisees, “shall enter into the kingdom of heaven, but he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven,” not “making it void by the traditions of men,” as the pharisees did.

5. It may be thought that in these verses the third person is used, and that they ought, therefore, to be classed with the four following verses. The force, however, of the previous use of the second person still continues, as we know from verse 20 it does in verses 17–19. But at verse 24 a transition is evidently made, and the same form of general statement is adopted as we find at the beginning of the discourse.

6. It thus appears that, as the two extreme portions of the sermon are parallel, so also are the portions which lie immediately *within* these.—(v. 13–20, and vii. 21–23.)

7. Within the range of professed adherence to religion, the interests of righteousness are exposed to danger from two different quarters. On the one hand, it is exposed to danger from antinomianism, and, on the other, from pharisaism. Some would deny the necessity of it; and others, admitting that it is necessary, would reduce it to a lifeless, partial, external thing. Our Lord opposes himself to both. In opposition to the former, he asserts, as we have seen, the necessity of righteousness (v. 13-20); and, in opposition to the latter, he describes and discriminates the true righteousness, as pervading and characterising the whole life, internal and external. As regards negative duties, or those enjoined in prohibitory precepts, pharisaism would place righteousness in mere outward abstinence from sin; and our Lord teaches that such abstinence does not bear the character of righteousness apart from the corresponding state of the heart (ver. 21-37); and as freedom from the affections, which impel to forbidden acts, would not constitute that state of heart, and could not be realised without the presence and operation of the opposite spirit, he requires the presence and operation of it.—(Ver. 38-48.)

8. Passing then from forbidden to commanded acts, he requires that these latter be performed from a supreme regard to the ultimate ends to be sought by us—the glory of God (vi. 1-18), and blessedness in the enjoyment of him.—(Ver. 19-34.)

9. In vindicating the spirituality and true import of the prohibitions of the law, in opposition to the glosses and limitations of tradition, our Lord teaches, as we have seen, that they are directed not only against outward acts of sin, but also against the corresponding sinful affections, and imply a requirement that the heart be occupied and the life duly influenced by the spirit and power of the opposite affection of love. That we may not violate them, therefore, it is not enough, for example, that we do not kill, we must not hate; and not only so, but we must love, and love our enemies, and act towards them as loving them, however differently they

may act towards us.—(v. 39–47.) In Luke's report, the exhortation, "judge not," with which Matthew begins chapter vii., forms a part of this inculcation of the exercise of love (vi. 37; comp. 38 with Matt. v. 42, and 35 with Matt. v. 44, 45); and, guided by this collocation, we may easily discover that it properly falls under this head. The scribes and pharisees, on the authority of tradition, taught retaliation—the returning of evil for evil in outward act (Matt. v. 38), and of hatred for hatred in inward feeling.—(Ver. 43.) In opposition to this casuistry, our Lord, as we have already seen, not only forbids retaliation, but enjoins the most opposite procedure. Now, retaliation is a manifestation of the spirit of hatred on our part, on occasion of a previous manifestation of it towards us on the part of others; and, when it is required that we flee to the greatest possible distance from the manifestation of it, even when thus provoked, it must of course be required that we be not ourselves beforehand in manifesting it, and that we do not perversely create, or search out for ourselves, or even too readily recognise, incitements to its activity. This, however, we should do, if we pried into the character of others with a secret, if not a conscious, desire to discover blemishes, and, the moment we discovered or could persuade ourselves we discovered any, greedily converted them into grounds of condemnation; if, in other words, we "judged," and "beheld the mote that is in our brother's eye." We shall not pursue this course towards those whom we love. It originates in hatred, and conducts to it. Besides, at the beginning of the section, which we hold to be here resumed, we find an emphatic condemnation of the use of epithets expressive of harsh and unbrotherly judgments.—(v. 22.)

We are thus authorised, not only by Luke's collocation, but also by the parallelism in respect of meaning, to regard the first five verses of chap. vii. as a resumption of chap. v. 38–48.

10. There is some difficulty in determining the connection of chap. vii. 6, from the abruptness of its introduction, and

the appearance of isolation which it therefore bears. The most natural view of it is, that our Lord, having enjoined a generous brotherly spirit, and bountiful *giving* under its influence, guards in this verse against an excess to which *giving* might be carried—the excess of “*giving* that which is holy unto the dogs,” and the excess of “casting pearls before swine.” To *give* in the one case would be to desecrate, and in the other to waste. Taking this view, we connect verse 6 with the five preceding ones.

11. We have now only to investigate the connection of chap. vii. 7–20; and having hitherto, in this second part of the discourse, met only with resumptions of the successive sections of the first part, we naturally expect to find that this passage is a resumption of the only section of it (chap. vi.), which is not resumed in the portion already examined; and this expectation prepares us to discern the significancy and recognise the sufficiency of direct evidence in support of this view, that might otherwise fail to produce belief, if not to engage attention.

12. In vindicating the spirituality of the law, our Lord, as we have seen, treats separately of its *prohibitions* and its *requirements*. He treats of the latter in chap. vi.; and one of his illustrations of the right performance of “what is required” in the law is derived from prayer. The prayers of the pharisees had reference to men (vi. 5); the outward act was performed, but from a corrupt motive; and he teaches that prayer, to bear its proper character and fulfil its proper office, must have exclusive reference to God. Having thus taught *how* we should pray, he now directs that we *do* pray, thus resuming, at an advanced stage of the treatment of it, the principal topic of the first part of chap. vi.

13. In the concluding portion of chap. vi., he instructs us to “lay up for ourselves treasures in heaven,” not “upon earth,” to “seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness.”—(Ver. 19, 20, 33.) And now, resuming this subject,

he directs that, "seeking the kingdom of God," we "enter in at the strait gate."—(vii. 13.)

14. We shall now exhibit at one view the structure of the sermon, as traced in the preceding remarks. But, before we do so, and though we think that the conclusions adopted have been sufficiently justified—and they will be further justified in the exposition—we must request that the reader, if he do not adopt, will at least abstain from rejecting them, until he has first familiarised his mind with structural parallelism, and with the proofs of its prevalence in the Scriptures, adduced by Mr Boys in the works referred to below.\*

- A. | v. 3-10. Blessed are the poor in spirit, &c.
- B. | a. | 11, 12. Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, &c.  
     | b. | 13-20. Ye are the salt of the earth, &c.
- C. | c. | 21-48. Ye have heard that it was said, &c.  
     |    | { e. | vi. 1-18. Take heed that ye do not your  
         |    |    |    | alms, &c.  
     |    | { d. |    | { f. | 19-34. Lay not up for yourselves  
         |    |    |    | treasure, &c.
- C. | c. | vii. 1-6. Judge not, that ye be not judged, &c.  
     |    | { d. | a. | 7-12. Ask, and it shall be given you, &c.  
         |    |    | f. | 13-20. Enter ye in at the strait gate, &c.
- B. | a. | 21. Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, &c.  
     | b. | 22, 23. Many will say to me in that day, &c.
- A. | v. 24-27. Therefore whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, &c.

15. In A. we have the statement of the theme, which again recurs in A., forming in this latter the peroration. B. and B. set forth that blessedness is attached to righteousness (a. and a.) and to righteousness only (b. and b.). In C. and C. righte-

\* If the reader has not at all studied the subject of *structural parallelism*—and we venture to express our regret that it is not more generally studied—the view here given may appear to him inadmissible, as presenting a plan too artificial and complicated. We can only at present remark that the *method*, which this plan exemplifies, pervades the Scriptures, referring for proof to Jebb's Sacred Literature, and to Boys's *Tactics Sacra*, and his *Key to the Book of Psalms*.

ousness is discriminated,—as regards abstinence from sin in *c.* and *c.*, and as regards the performance of duty in *d.* and *d.*, *e.* and *e.* requiring that in the performance of it there be a supreme reference to God, and *f.* and *f.* a supreme desire, so far as regards our own interests, to enter into the kingdom of heaven.

16. It does not devolve upon us to vindicate structural parallelism, as a species of *method* which obtains in the Scriptures; we may, however, observe that it does not at all militate against the natural and legitimate progress of the thought, but rather springs from it. In the case before us, the righteous are pronounced blessed (*A.*); and this announcement is then confirmed, the connection of blessedness with righteousness (*B. a.*), and with righteousness exclusively (*B. b.*), being set forth for this purpose. The claims of righteousness having been thus established, the importance of discriminating its character becomes evident, and its character is therefore discriminated (*C.*) The discourse could not be advantageously closed at this point. The considerations fitted to serve the purposes of persuasion, which had been presented (*B.*), challenged attention to the discrimination which followed, but were too remote to support the peroration. Accordingly those considerations are presented anew, and in a still more impressive light (*B.*),—a basis for them having been laid by a brief resumption and extension of the discrimination of the character of righteousness (*C.*) And then the peroration follows (*A.*), with every advantage that arrangement could confer. While the reiteration serves the purpose now indicated, it is quite in keeping with the importance of the subject and the profound earnestness of the preacher.

SECTION III.—WHETHER THE DISCOURSE REPORTED BY LUKE  
(VI. 20-49) IS THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT.

1. This is a question for the harmoniser of the gospels, rather than for the expositor of the sermon on the mount as recorded by Matthew. It is not, however, without its interest and importance to the latter. A satisfactory answer to it will contribute to his information; and every accession of relevant information will enable him to prosecute his work, if not with greater success, at least with greater comfort. And, particularly, it concerns him to know, whether a parallel passage, which claims his attention to whatever class of parallel passages it may be referable, should be regarded by him as another rendering or report of the discourse reported in the passage on which he is engaged. In this latter case, the parallelism will possess peculiar significancy, and demand corresponding consideration.\*

2. In this inquiry we, of course, proceed on the fidelity of the narrators; for we not only have entire confidence in their fidelity, but hold, as a general principle, that the question of the credit due to the sacred writers should not be mingled with the discussions and processes of exposition. That question should be disposed of at the outset; and the result obtained should be received unchallenged, as an ascertained element, in all subsequent investigations.

3. The point to be determined is, whether, in our Lord's ministry, the discourse reported by Luke, in the passage now under consideration, occupied the same position, or was imbedded and set in the same circumstances, as the sermon on the mount. If it was delivered on the same occasion, in the same place, and at the same time, originating as the sermon on the mount originated, beginning where and when

\* The reader will find an illustration of this statement in the preceding section, par. 9.

that sermon began, and ending where and when it ended, it must itself be the same or a part of the same discourse.

4. On the evening preceding the delivery of the sermon recorded by Luke, Jesus "went up into a mountain," that, at a distance from the habitations of men, and elevated above the bustle and noise of their pursuits, he might enjoy retirement for "prayer to God;" and, having "continued all night" in this exercise, "when it was day he called unto him his disciples, and chose twelve of them, whom also he named apostles."—(Luke vi. 12, 13.) After having thus spent the night and the early morning, "he came down with them and stood in the plain," or rather *on a level place*, ἐπὶ τόπου πεδινῷ—forming, it would appear, a natural terrace on the side of the mountain. Here he was surrounded by "a great multitude of people," and "healed all" that had need of healing.—(17-19.) Then followed the delivery of the discourse to which our present inquiry refers.—(Ver. 20.)

5. Two of the facts, which Luke thus relates circumstantially, are only cursorily mentioned by Matthew. This evangelist simply states that Christ went up into a mountain, without informing us that he did so in the evening, or that he spent all the night in prayer to God; and, again, that, "when he was set, his disciples came unto him," without informing us that this took place on the following morning.—(v. 1.) His passing indication, however, of the connection of the former of these facts with the presence of the multitudes, agrees well with the circumstantial details given by Luke, and should, we conceive, be explained by them. His words are (verse 1), "Seeing the multitudes he went up into a mountain;" and he elsewhere informs us, in a passage (ix. 36-38) which we regard as chronologically parallel with this statement, and which certainly presents a parallel case, that "seeing the multitudes he was moved with compassion on them, because they were as sheep having no shepherd," and that, influenced by this view of their condition, and by the

compassion which it awakened, "he said to his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that he will send forth labourers into his harvest." Guided by this information, we at once discover his special object in going up into a mountain. He retired to its solitude to act himself on the direction which he had just given to his disciples. The terms in which Matthew refers to the other of these two facts agree equally well with Luke's detailed statement. Our Lord during the night, the whole of which he spent in prayer, was not "set;" and, accordingly, for the purpose of indicating the time at which "his disciples came to him," *when he was set and when it was day* are precisely equivalent expressions.

6. Matthew makes no reference to Christ's descent, after the ordination of the apostles, to a lower part of the mountain; for it was sufficient for his purpose, and indeed better adapted to it, as we shall afterwards see, that he should indicate generally, without determining the precise locality, that the sermon, which he was proceeding to report, was delivered on a mountain. He mentions, however, in the immediately preceding context (iv. 23-25), that great multitudes followed Christ, and that many cures were performed by him throughout the period to which he refers the sermon on the mount; and we learn from him incidentally (vii. 28), that the multitudes—*οἱ ὄχλοι*—and those formerly mentioned (iv. 25, v. 1) must be understood—were present at the delivery of the sermon; for he informs us that at the close of it they "were astonished" at Christ's doctrine.

7. The twelve apostles, as we have already seen, were chosen on the morning of the day on which the discourse reported by Luke was delivered (Luke vi. 13); but, while Matthew records the sermon on the mount in chapters v.-vii. of his gospel, his first mention of the apostles occurs in chap. x. Here we have an important fact, placed by Luke *chronologically before* the discourse which he reports, and first re-

*ferred* to by Matthew *after* he reports the sermon on the mount. On this apparent discrepancy some have founded an argument against the identity of the two discourses. We cannot accept Tholuck's answer to this argument. Like the argument itself, it proceeds upon an erroneous view of the structure of this part of Matthew's gospel. It does not seem to have been quite satisfactory even to himself.\* The correct answer is, that, while Luke determines the chronological relation of the election of the apostles to the sermon which he reports, Matthew does not determine its chronological relation to the sermon on the mount. No inference on this point can be founded on the fact that he does not refer to the election of the apostles, for he does not *relate* it at all, till after he reports that sermon. The explanation of this postponement of his reference to it, is to be found in the design and consequent structure of the part of his gospel in which it occurs. In chapter iv. verse 23, he states, as the theme of an historical discourse, that "Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching in their synagogues, and preaching the gospel of the kingdom, and healing all manner of sickness and all manner of disease among the people;" and then he proceeds to illustrate this theme. This is the design of the nine following chapters—v.—xiii.; and, accordingly, the facts related in them are arranged in subserviency to this design, and not chronologically. The evangelist first refers to Christ's employment of the agency of others in the work specified (iv. 24, 25, v. 1); and then describes his personal prosecution of it by teaching (v. 2-vii.), and by healing (viii.—ix. 34.) He

\* "The fact," he says, "that that evangelist [Luke] places the election of the apostles before the sermon, is such, that if we hold the identity of the piece in Matthew with that in Luke, the authenticity of the former becomes extremely doubtful, while, if we maintain its authenticity, we are obliged to explain the discourse in the latter, along with the election of the apostles, as a subsequent occurrence."—*Clarke's Bib. Cabinet*, vol. v. p. 35. Of course, no satisfactory answer could be given if this were the state of the case.

then again states his theme (ix. 35), and resumes the illustration of it. He now relates somewhat fully his employment of the agency of others (ix. 36-x.); and then describes his personal prosecution of the work by healing (xi.-xii.), and by teaching (xiii.)

8. It is observable that, in the first description of Christ's personal prosecution of the work of teaching and preaching, he encounters incipient but growing opposition. When "he rebuked the winds and the sea," and allayed the storm, "the men" only " marvelled ;" there was no intelligent recognition of him (viii. 26, 27) ; the Gergesenes " besought him that he would depart out of their coasts" (viii. 34) ; certain scribes at Capernaum regarded him as a blasphemer (ix. 3) ; and, to omit other instances, the pharisees represented him as " casting out devils through the prince of the devils" (ix. 34.) In the second or resumed description, we find this opposition still more pervasive and rapidly acquiring increased intensity, until at last it reaches a crisis. The pharisees " held a council against him how they might destroy him" (xii. 14), and his relatives sought " to lay hold on him, for they said he is beside himself."—(xii. 46-50, compared with Mark iii. 21.) The illustration given of his teaching in this second description, presents it in a form adapted to the circumstances in which he was thus placed, " He spake many things unto them in parables."—(xiii. 3; comp. 10-17.)

9. The plan now traced may be thus exhibited :—

#### GENERAL STATEMENT.

A. | iv. 23. Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching, &c.

#### DETAILED ILLUSTRATION.

- B. | iv. 24, 25 ; v. 1. To meet the urgency of the case, he taught and healed by the agency of others.\*
- C. { a. | v. 2-vii. He taught personally.  
b. | viii.-ix. 34. He healed personally.

\* In chap. iv. ver. 24, 25, the circumstances are stated under which the multitudes came together, and then chap. v. ver. 1 (comp. with Luke vi. 12, 13) relates the first step taken by Christ towards sending forth the

## GENERAL STATEMENT.

A. | ix. 35. Jesus went about all Galilee, teaching, &c.

## DETAILED ILLUSTRATION.

B. | ix. 36-x. To meet the urgency of the case, he taught and healed by the agency of others.

C. { b. | xi.-xii. He healed personally.  
a. | xiii. He taught personally.

10. Such being Matthew's plan in this part of his gospel, or—if the reader should not be prepared to accept our exposition of his plan—his object being to illustrate the theme which he enunciates in chapter iv. verse 23, and again in chapter ix. verse 35,\* no chronological inference can be founded on his postponement of the reference to the election of the apostles. And for the same reason no such inference can be drawn from the point at which he introduces his own call.—(ix. 9.)

11. It thus appears that the historical antecedents of the discourse reported by Luke are identical with those of the sermon on the mount. Let us now present this identity at one view.

DETAILED NARRATIVE.  
Jesus, seeing the multitudes, was moved with compassion on them, because they were scattered abroad as sheep having no shepherd. Then saith he unto his disciples, The harvest truly is plenteous, but the labourers are few; pray ye therefore the Lord of the harvest that he will send forth labourers into his harvest.—(Matt. ix. 36-38.) Having spoken

MATTHEW.  
Seeing the multitudes,

LUKE.

twelve. The subject thus briefly introduced, is resumed in terms which clearly re-echo those employed in introducing it (comp. ix. 36-x. 1 with v. 1), and finally disposed of in ix. 36-x.

\* That the statement in the latter passage is not to be taken as referring to a second and distinct circuit, is evident from the fact, that some of the events related after this statement is made are unquestionably of an earlier date than some of those related before it is made. The very event with which we are now immediately concerned is an instance.—(x. 1-4. See also xii. 1-8 comp. Luke vi. 1-5; and xii. 9-13 comp. Luke vi. 6-10.)



it, or merely an abstract of such portions; and what it embraced, whether the whole or a part, it might present in all its bearings, or only in one or some of them. Thus, in two truthful reports considerable diversity may occur; and where each reporter, instead of intending simply to furnish a report, is engaged in executing a specific design, and produces his report for the sole purpose of fulfilling its requirements, such diversity will necessarily obtain.\* Accordingly, in the case before us, which is exactly a case of two reports produced to fulfil the requirements of two different designs, we meet with considerable diversity; but at the same time with far less diversity than would be perfectly consistent with the view that the two reports are reports of one and the same discourse. Matthew's design required that he should illustrate Christ's teaching; and, to illustrate it under one of its phases, he adduces the sermon on the mount. It was necessary for him, therefore, to report this sermon somewhat fully, and to place it prominently in view. Accordingly, he does not throw it into the current of a chronological narrative, in which it might seem to find a place, rather from a regard to the order of events, than from any peculiar claim which it had to consideration; but introduces it at once as an illustration of Christ's teaching, and by avoiding all circumstantial details, challenges and seeks to secure for it undivided and exclusive attention. He intimates, indeed, that it was addressed to

\* Just views of the inspiration of the Scriptures will not permit us to regard diversities in the corresponding portions of the different gospels as in any degree fortuitous. They were doubtless designed. We can easily perceive that they serve to discover that each of the gospels is an independent narrative, and thus to prove that their agreement and concurrence, in recording one history and delineating one character, arise wholly from their authenticity, and not from collusion. The argumentative use, however, that may thus be made of the diversities in question, does not account for their existence; and their origin, therefore, must be sought elsewhere. While all the gospels have one common object, each of them has also its own specific design; and this diversity of design, we conceive, is the source, as stated in the text, of the diversities to be met with in their narratives.

great multitudes, and delivered upon a mountain; but this information, broadly conveyed, and unencumbered with minute particulars,—and it is thus he conveys it,—serves, simply and very effectually, to bring the reader under the influence of the impressive and arresting circumstances under which the discourse was delivered.\* For Luke's purpose, again, it was sufficient to relate the delivery, and indicate the leading, or some of the leading, topics of the discourse.

13. And, while the diversity of the reports is thus fully accounted for by difference of design, their agreement is such as can be accounted for on no other view than the one to which we have been led by the examination of the historical connection,—the view that it is one and the same discourse that is presented in both. All, however, that our argument requires is, that they exhibit no disagreement inconsistent with this view. But, in determining the amount of disagreement that would not be inconsistent with it, it is to be borne in mind that Matthew's report bears very much the character of a comprehensive digest of the whole discourse, and that it is to be expected, therefore, that Luke's shorter and more fragmentary report, though differing from it by presenting less, should agree with it in what it presents. If Matthew gives an abstract of the whole discourse; what Luke reports, if he reports the same discourse, must correspond with some portion of this abstract. Now, such is exactly the state of the case; and thus the actual amount of agreement is as great as it could be expected to be simultaneously with difference of design and the diversity arising from it. It is far greater than it could well have been if both reports were fragmentary. In that case, the fragments preserved by the one report might all be different, and some of them could scarcely fail to be different from the fragments preserved by the other.

\* Here we see the reason why Matthew does not mention the election of the apostles, or the descent to a "level place."

14. Luke's report begins with the beatitudes, which, so far as his report goes, are the same as the beatitudes with which the sermon on the mount begins in Matthew.—(Comp. Luke vi. 20-23 with Matt. v. 3-12.) He uses, indeed, the second person; but this is accounted for by observing the point at which his report begins. He seems to omit the enunciation of the theme (Matt. v. 3-10); and thus his report begins at the point reached by Matthew in chap. v. ver. 11; and the first seven verses of it are to be regarded as parallel with Matt. v. 11-20, setting forth, like that section of Matthew's report, the unfailling and exclusive connection of blessedness with righteousness. From this topic Luke proceeds, as Matthew does, to the discrimination of righteousness (comp. 27-36 with Matt. v. 38-48), introducing in continuous connection what forms the resumption of this head in Matthew's arrangement.—(Comp. 37, 38 with Matt. vii. 1, 2.) Verses 39 and 40, and the resumption of them in verses 43-45,—for it is in this light we regard these latter verses,—are parallel with Matt. vii. 15-20; and, then, verses 41, 42 resume verses 37, 38, being parallel with Matt. vii. 3-5. Ver. 46 is parallel with Matt. vii. 21. In both reports the peroration is given.—(Comp. Matt. vii. 24-27 with Luke vi. 47-49.)

15. That the reader may the more easily and fully appreciate the agreement now traced, we shall present it in a tabular form, taking as a basis the view already given of the plan and structure of the sermon on the mount: \*—

|                                                  | MATTHEW.                           |                   | LUKE.        |
|--------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------|-------------------|--------------|
| Theme enunciated,                                | A.   v. 3-10,                      |                   | ..           |
| Blessedness attached to right-<br>eousness,      | B.   a.   11, 12,                  |                   | vi. 20, 23.  |
| Blessedness attached to right-<br>eousness only, | b.   13-20,                        |                   | 24-26.       |
| Righteousness discriminated,                     | C.   c.   21-48,                   | C.   c.   27-36.  |              |
|                                                  | d. { e.   vi. 1-18,<br>f.   19-34, |                   |              |
|                                                  | C.   c.   vii. 1-8,                |                   | 37, 38.      |
|                                                  | d. { e.   7-12,<br>f.   13-20,     |                   | f.   39, 40. |
|                                                  |                                    | C.   c.   41, 42. |              |
|                                                  |                                    | f.   43-45.       |              |

\* See Intro., sect. ii. par. 14.

|                                                  |               |        |
|--------------------------------------------------|---------------|--------|
| Blessedness attached to right-<br>eousness,      | B.   a.   21, | } 46   |
| Blessedness attached to right-<br>eousness only, |               |        |
| Peroration,                                      |               |        |
|                                                  | A.   24-27,   | 47-49. |

16. It appears, from this comparative view, that in both reports we have the same topics in the same order; and due attention to the structure of Luke's report will discover that it agrees with Matthew's, even in those passages which it has been supposed to introduce in a different connection and with a different meaning; and also in those which are peculiar to it. Regarding even Matthew's fuller report as presenting only an abstract of the sermon, we are not surprised that Luke's report, brief as it is, preserves additional passages of illustration or enlargement. Of such passages, however, there are only four,—ver. 24-26, 38-40, 45, and 46; and, when they are viewed in the connection in which they are presented in the preceding table, it is evident that, in preserving them, it does not deviate from Matthew's report, but only supplements it by giving additional portions of the illustrative or discussion,—a species of supplement for which an abstract, from its very nature, will leave ample room. In like manner, when verses 43, 44, are viewed, not as connected with what immediately precedes, but as a resumption of verses 39, 40, they are seen to be exactly parallel with the corresponding passage in Matt. vii. 16-18. The latter portion, however, of ver. 44 is rather to be classed with passages peculiar to Luke; and, by combining it with the corresponding passage in Matthew vii. 16, we obtain a full report, or a fuller report than is given by either evangelist, of the illustration employed by our Lord, "Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles? or do they gather figs of thorns, or grapes of a bramble-bush?" This variation of the question might have been intended to bring out, that *universally*, and not *in some cases* only, men are known by their works, as, universally, and not in some cases only, trees are known by their fruit.

17. In Matthew's report, v. 38-47 forms but one para-

graph, of which the subject is retaliation. This paragraph consists of two members, 38-42 and 43-47. In Luke's report, the second of these, or, rather, the member corresponding to it (27, 28), stands first, and the member corresponding to the first (29-31) second. The origin of this diversity may have been, that this portion of the sermon, as delivered, formed an introverted parallelism, and that Matthew follows the order of the two first, and Luke that of the two last members of it. In what immediately follows in Luke (32-36) the injunctions in 27, 28, and in 29-31, respectively, are alternately enforced. In ver. 46 of Luke's report we have, probably, the words in which our Lord introduced the section of the sermon reported in Matthew vii. 21-23.

18. It is held by some that, in reporting the sermon on the mount, Matthew has introduced extraneous matter, derived from our Lord's discourses and sayings on other occasions.\* If this view were well-founded, it would evidently follow that the discourse reported by Luke is different from that given by Matthew, the former alone having been delivered by Christ, while the latter is the compilation of the evangelist. Matthew, however, distinctly intimates that the discourse which he records was, the whole of it, delivered by Christ on the occasion to which he refers it. He introduces it with the announcement, that, on the mountain, after his disciples had come to him, great multitudes being present, "He opened his mouth, and taught them saying"—what then follows; and, at the close of the discourse, he represents Christ as having "ended these sayings"—the sayings just recorded. How, then, can any one hold, and yet regard Matthew as an inspired or even a trustworthy writer, that some of the sayings were not at all uttered by Christ on the mountain?

\* Among recent writers, Olshausen in his *Commentary*, Neander in his "Life of Christ," and Da Costa in his "Four Witnesses," adopt this theory.

19. It is true that some passages, given in Matthew's report as portions of the sermon on the mount, are omitted in Luke's, and introduced by this latter evangelist elsewhere, in historical connections in which they were evidently uttered.\* But this is no proof that they did not form portions of the sermon on the mount. If Matthew is trustworthy, we must proceed on it as a fact that he is so, and receive his report as a true report. It may seem improbable that a passage of any considerable length, and that did not bear the character of a proverbial saying, should have been uttered by Christ on more than one occasion; but, at the utmost, it is only improbable. And are we to set aside an established and admitted fact,—in this case the trustworthiness of Matthew,—rather than receive what is only improbable; and to attach more weight to our previous conception of what is *likely* than to our knowledge of what *is*? We protest against the logic that requires or tolerates this procedure; and it is a logic too often resorted to in Scripture criticism.

20. We doubt, however, if the *repetition* in question is improbable. That ordinary teachers do not thus repeat them—

The following are the passages referred to:—

|                                              |                |
|----------------------------------------------|----------------|
| Luke xi. 2-4 compared with Matthew vi. 9-13; |                |
| xii. 22-31                                   | ... 25-33;     |
| xi. 9-13                                     | ... vii. 7-11. |

There are others in which the parallelism is less remarkable:—

|                                                   |                 |
|---------------------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Luke xii. 58, 59 compared with Matthew v. 25, 26; |                 |
| xvi. 18                                           | ... 32;         |
| xi. 34, 35                                        | ... vi. 22, 23; |
| xvi. 13                                           | ... 24.         |

The following may be added:—

|                                                             |                  |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|
| Luke xiv. 34, 35 compared with Matt. v. 13 and Mark ix. 50; |                  |
| viii. 16, xi. 33                                            | ... 15 iv. 21;   |
| xvi. 17                                                     | ... 18;          |
| xii. 33, 34                                                 | ... vi. 19-21;   |
| xiii. 24                                                    | ... vii. 13, 14; |
| 25-27                                                       | ... 21-23.       |

Compare also Matt. xviii. 8, 9 and Mark ix. 43-48 with Matt. v. 29, 30; and Mark xi. 25, 26 with Matt. vi. 14, 15.

selves, may arise from the imperfection of their teaching and the dimness of their views. But we submit that it is exactly what we should expect, that an all-wise and omniscient Teacher should at different times employ the same terms in inculcating the same truth or combating the same error. Having already, with the perfect insight and discernment which are possible only to Omniscience, employed the terms that ought to be employed, why should he substitute others? Would not the same insight and discernment lead him to employ them again? It may be true that two distinct occasions can scarcely be exactly alike; but it does not follow, from the partial dissimilarity of the occasions, that the instructions delivered on both should not be the same, for those instructions may apply only to what is common to them.

21. On the supposition of the repetition of certain passages by Christ on different occasions, the plan of any one gospel could scarcely require that, if they were of any considerable length, they should be given in it more than once; and what we should expect is, that, as regards some of them at least, the reports of the different evangelists should refer them to different occasions of delivery. And with this expectation the actual facts agree. Of passages reported, say by two evangelists, some are introduced by both in the same historical connection, and others by each in a different historical connection. To hold that passages disposed of in this latter manner were delivered only once, is a proceeding the most arbitrary and unscientific. It may be supported with great ingenuity and learning, but it is radically vicious and unwarrantable. It is a mere fancy that it is improbable a passage should be uttered on two different occasions. There is not a shadow of scientific ground for such a view; and any superstructure that may be founded upon it, however laboriously reared, is utterly baseless. When one evangelist reports a passage as delivered on one occasion, and another reports it as delivered on a different occasion, we have evidence, if their

testimony be evidence, that it was delivered on both occasions; and if their testimony be not sufficient to establish this fact, it must be altogether worthless.

22. As regards shorter passages, however, we find some such reported by the same evangelist as uttered on different occasions.—(Comp. Luke viii. 16 with xi. 13; Matt. v. 29, 30, with xviii. 8, 9; x. 38, 39, with xvi. 24, 25; and xvii. 20, with xxi. 21.) Instances of such repetition of proverbial expressions and of formulas in frequent use are, as might be expected, more numerous. Thus, “He that hath an ear to hear, let him hear,” occurs thrice in Matt. (xi. 15, xiii. 9, 43); thrice in Mark (iv. 9, 23, vii. 16); and twice in Luke (viii. 8, xiv. 35); and these passages furnish evidence that it was used on five different occasions by our Lord. We have also evidence that he used a modified and extended form of it, “He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches,” on seven different occasions.—(Rev. ii. 7, 11, 17, 29; iii. 7, 13, 22.)

## PART I.—(A\*) V. 3-10.

## SECTION I.—RIGHTEOUSNESS DELINEATED.

1. The subject of the sermon is righteousness—not “the righteousness of God, which is by faith of Jesus Christ, unto all and upon all them that believe” (Rom. iii. 22), but “the righteousness of the law, which is fulfilled in those who walk not after the flesh but after the Spirit” (Rom. viii. 4); that is, the righteousness of personal character and conduct. This righteousness is presented in our passage under all its aspects. In our circumstances there are three aspects which it necessarily bears, derived respectively from our position as sentient, our position as moral, and our position as social beings. Under these aspects, accordingly, our Lord presents it; and he presents it first as it is realised internally in the dispositions and exercises of the soul, both under a passive and under an active form. He delineates it under a passive form in the first three beatitudes. It appears under this form in those who are “poor in spirit,” not filled or elated with what they already possess; in those “who mourn,” deplore the derangement and deformity of their character; and in those who are “meek,” mild and patient under injurious treatment.

\* The different members or heads of the discourse we indicate by the letters attached to them in our view of its structure.—(See Intro., sect. ii. par. 14.)

He then delineates it under an active form in the next three beatitudes. It appears under this form in those "who hunger and thirst after righteousness;" in those who are "merciful," disposed to forgive, and to do good even to such as need forgiveness; and in those who are "pure in heart," delighting exclusively in what is holy.

2. From this delineation of righteousness as realised in inward dispositions and exercises, he passes to the delineation of it as realised in the outward activity and intercourse of life, under the two aspects under which alone it can be realised in the sphere of outward life, the aspect which it derives from our position as social, and that which it derives from our position as moral beings. It appears under the former in those who are "peacemakers," and under the latter in those "who are persecuted for righteousness' sake."

3. In this delineation of righteousness, men are first viewed as sentient beings, capable of delighting and finding satisfaction in a certain portion; and righteousness is described as consisting partly in the right bearing towards the things in which we are solicited to delight and to seek satisfaction. Things of this kind form two classes—things which are seen and temporal, and things which are unseen and eternal. Now, it is one element of righteousness that we do not rest or seek satisfaction in things of the former class. We are not to neglect them wholly, or to treat them as if they were in all respects unworthy of the least consideration. Such treatment of them would be inconsistent with our circumstances. We are to value them for the temporal and temporary purposes which they are appointed to serve; but not to regard them as either intended or adapted to afford satisfaction. Hence, as the things which are unseen and eternal are not to be fully possessed and enjoyed here, the present state, at the best, is characterised by much want. The spiritually enlightened perceive and experience this; and, consequently, their feeling is that they are poor, that they have not yet

attained to their proper portion and rest. Whatever they already possess, or have already reached, they cannot look upon it and receive it as sufficient to afford them satisfaction. Hence, though they may be rich comparatively, as already possessing much, yet as regards their bearing towards what they possess, being unable to rest in it, they are "poor in spirit." Thus, to be "poor in spirit" is to be "strangers and pilgrims upon the earth, desiring a better country, that is an heavenly."

4. When the righteous are described as "poor in spirit," we see them rejecting an unsuitable and insufficient portion, or rather refusing to rest in such a portion; but they are described also as "pure in heart;" and, when they are so described, we see them prepared to delight in their appropriate portion—of a character to appreciate and to relish all that is holy, and only that which is holy. This is the proper manifestation of purity; for it consists in freedom from all that would form a source of sympathy with what is polluted, and in the presence of all that forms a source of sympathy with what is characterised by holy excellence and beauty. Thus righteousness, under one of its aspects, consists in being "poor in spirit," maintaining the proper bearing towards present things as sources of satisfaction, and in being "pure in heart," prepared for the appreciation and enjoyment of our appropriate portion.

5. In the delineation of righteousness in our passage, men are next viewed as moral beings. When they are viewed as sentient and social beings, they necessarily appear also as moral beings; but, in the part of the delineation with which we have now to do, they are viewed as moral beings only;\* and, accordingly, righteousness is described as consisting

\* It is true, however, that their exercises, with respect to the state of their moral character, spring partly from their sentient nature, and the manifestations of their moral character are necessarily to a great extent connected with their social relations.

partly in the proper exercises and procedure with respect to the present state and the improvement of the moral character, and in its ultimate perfection. The character being grievously defective and disfigured—sin dwelling and working in the members—it is one element of righteousness to mourn on this account. It is thus essential to the character of the righteous, that they regard with sorrow the presence of sin in their hearts and in their lives. The chief causes of this sorrow are the following:—The righteous love God,—being “pure in heart,” they cannot but love him; and, therefore, it is a cause of grief to them, that they have dishonoured and still dishonour him by their sins. Sin is also pernicious in its operation. It loads with guilt, degrades, and defiles those who commit it. In its nature it is a deadly evil. Even when its operation is so arrested that its ultimate consequences will not arise, it still works much mischief. Each of the righteous, therefore, finding it ever present with him, cries out sorrowfully with Paul, “Wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?”—(Rom. vii. 24.)

6. But it is not only the blots and blemishes of their character that the righteous contemplate; they contemplate also the beauty in which it should be clothed—the perfect righteousness which should distinguish it, and they “hunger and thirst” after this righteousness—desire ardently to attain to it. Mourning that they have worn and still wear the filthy garments of sin, they long to be clothed with change of raiment—with spotless robes of inwrought righteousness. This longing desire will necessarily lead to practical efforts; but at present we have to do with righteousness as realised inwardly in the dispositions and exercises of the soul. Finally, men are viewed as social beings, and their righteousness is described as consisting partly in assuming and maintaining the right bearing with respect to the injurious and oppressive treatment met with from the world. Under such treatment the righteous are “meek.” Being like their Master,

and following his example, when they are reviled, they revile not again; when they suffer, they threaten not; but commit themselves to Him that judgeth righteously. This meekness is totally different from want of spirit. They are aware that in whatever way and to whatever extent men may contribute to their sufferings, still their sufferings are allotted to them by Him whose kingdom ruleth over all, and by whom the very hairs of their heads are all numbered. And, therefore, they are meek under man's injurious treatment of them, that they may submit without murmuring or any refractoriness to the righteous appointment of God. And, besides, though they may not have deserved buffeting at the hand of man, they know that they have deserved chastisement at the hand of God; and, therefore, they calm their spirit with the reflection, "Wherefore doth a living man complain, a man for the punishment of his sins?" Further still, they consider that God afflicts his people for their profit, that they may be partakers of his holiness.

7. But the righteous are not always weak and oppressed. Sometimes their unbelieving neighbours are weak and they are strong; their unbelieving neighbours are necessitous, and they are in a position to give. Under such circumstances they are "merciful." To do good and to communicate they forget not; and, like their Father in heaven, they do good, and communicate even to the evil and to the unthankful. They forgive injuries and overlook unworthiness; and, unhindered by those obstacles, prosecute their ministry of benevolence.

8. Such is the inward character of the righteous, as delineated by Him who impresses it. They are poor in spirit and pure in heart, they mourn on account of sin, and hunger and thirst after righteousness, and they are meek and merciful.

9. Let us now follow the delineation of their character to the sphere of outward life. And here we find the meek and

merciful as "peacemakers." Acting now, as when they exercised meekness and mercy, in their social capacity, they endeavour to allay the strifes and compose the differences which fill the world with so much distraction and distress. God is angry with sinners, and sinners in their infatuation wage war with God, and men are involved in multiplied and endless contests with each other. Adapting their efforts to the evils with which they are thus surrounded, the righteous labour to restore and establish peace.

10. While it is an important feature of their character that they are thus peacemakers, our Lord seems to have designedly introduced this feature of it here, that it might be evident that the persecution which they encounter, and which he immediately afterwards brings into view, is not provoked by a contentious spirit, or by contentious conduct on their part. They are peaceful, and promoters of peace, though they are persecuted.

11. Our Lord now concludes his delineation of their character by describing them as "persecuted for righteousness' sake." We saw them before mourning on account of sin, and hungering and thirsting after righteousness, and now we find their righteousness so prominent, that the world can no longer bear it—they are persecuted for it. This statement, while it indicates the advanced maturity of their character, indicates also their steadfastness. They do not abandon the path of righteousness, though it carries them into the midst of persecution.

#### SECTION II.—ADVANTAGE ATTACHED TO RIGHTEOUSNESS.

1. We now proceed to the advantage attached to righteousness. And it is not a partial or limited advantage that is attached to it, but the entire aggregate of real advantage—blessedness.

2. The disposition to rest in temporal things as the source

of happiness proves itself, in every age, one of the most powerfully operative dispositions of our fallen nature. There is, probably, no other disposition that lays human activity under so heavy a contribution. Under the influence of this disposition, which had been raised by various causes to great power and activity, carnal views and expectations respecting the Messiah's kingdom prevailed among our Lord's hearers and throughout the nation. The prevalent conception of it was, that it should be, if not wholly, at least so far of this world, that the Messiah should sustain the character of a mighty conqueror, and should elevate the Jewish people, as his subjects, to be the chief, the most powerful, and prosperous among the nations. To those carnal views and anticipations, our Lord at once opposed himself. Those with whom he had immediately to deal reckoned those happy who were rich in worldly possessions, and expected that the subjects of the Messiah should be thus rich; in opposition to such carnal views and expectations, he proclaims that the poor in spirit alone are happy—those who esteem and cannot but esteem themselves poor, whatever they possess, until they attain to the full enjoyment of their proper and eternal portion; and who, being pure in heart, have those holy and heavenly tastes that qualify for the enjoyment of it. They reckoned those happy who rejoiced, being satisfied not only with their circumstances, but also with themselves, and expected that the subjects of the Messiah should be thus happy; in opposition again to such carnal views and expectations, he proclaims that those alone are happy who mourn because of the diseases of their souls, and the deformity of their character, and hunger and thirst after righteousness, and who, though their proficiency in righteousness may have already exposed them to the enmity of a righteousness-hating world, still persevere in the prosecution and practice of it. They reckoned those happy who repelled every aggression, avenged every wrong, and triumphed over all their enemies, and expected that the

subjects of the Messiah should be thus happy; and, in opposition to such carnal views and expectations, he proclaims that those alone are happy who are meek and merciful, and ministers of peace. In a word, they expected a happiness springing from outward circumstances, and he proclaims and promises a happiness based upon personal character.

3. It may be remarked, generally, in regard to the happiness which, according to our passage, is allotted to the righteous, that it is described in terms expressive of its entire adaptation and suitableness to their desires and tastes. The poor in spirit are heirs of the kingdom of heaven. Declining to rest, and incapable of resting in an earthly, they shall receive a heavenly portion. Those that mourn shall be comforted. Those that hunger and thirst after righteousness shall be filled. The pure in heart, whose delight is in what is holy, shall see God. It is far from being the case, however, that nothing further is necessary to our happiness, than the possession of what is adapted to our tastes and desires. If our tastes be not pure and our desires well directed, neither the possession of what is adapted to them, nor any thing else, can afford us happiness. As we shall afterwards have occasion to evince at large, none but the righteous can be happy.

4. There are two grounds on which men may be pronounced happy. They may be pronounced happy as regards their experience, or because they are already in the enjoyment of happiness; and they may be pronounced happy because their present position is such that they shall afterwards be happy as regards their experience. It is on this latter ground that, according to the statement of the apostle James, "we count them happy that endure." And it is on this ground, at least mainly, that the righteous are pronounced happy in our passage. This is evident from the fact, that, while they are declared to be already happy, the grounds on which they are declared to be happy are almost all future, and to be yet realised. Thus the ground on which the meek

are declared happy is that they shall inherit the earth—that, though not as yet happy, as regards their experience, they are so circumstanced that they shall be thus happy hereafter. Accordingly, the declaration that the righteous are blessed, conveys that there is somewhat already realised in their case, to which future actually experienced blessedness is attached. What it is, we learn from the description given of their character and exercises, and from the declaration that theirs is the kingdom of heaven.

5. By the kingdom of heaven is meant the spiritual kingdom which Christ administers, comprising the department of grace on earth, and the department of glory in heaven. Of this kingdom the righteous are the subjects, and, consequently, so far as is compatible with their condition, or required by their welfare as subjects, it is theirs. In virtue of their enrolment among its subjects, they have a right,—a right graciously conferred indeed, but only the more valid and stable on that account,—to all the advantages that are necessary to secure and that constitute blessedness. In the first place, they have a right to the provision and supply suitable, in the mean time, for its subjects. It is essential to the arrangements of a well-ordered kingdom, that the subjects have access to sufficient means of subsistence. Accordingly, in the kingdom of heaven provision is made for supplying the wants and developing the powers of the spiritual life, on which the administration of this kingdom bears—such provision that the subjects of it shall lack no good thing. In the second place, they have a right to protection. As being righteous, and the subjects of the kingdom of heaven, they have many malignant and powerful enemies, from whose assaults they are wholly unable to defend themselves in their own strength. Their position, therefore, would be altogether insecure, and their utter ruin would soon be effected, if the constitution of the kingdom had not provided that ample protection should be extended to them. But this the constitu-

tion of the kingdom has provided. Their almighty sovereign defends them. In the third place, they have a right to the future and consummated glory and blessedness of the kingdom of heaven. They are heirs of God and joint-heirs with Christ Jesus; they have been begotten again to a lively hope by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead, to an inheritance incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for them.

6. And, as the kingdom of heaven is theirs, in the sense that they have a right to all advantages, here and hereafter, which the administration of it is intended to confer on its subjects, it is theirs also in the sense that those advantages are already in course of being conferred upon them. Christ has already imparted to them many and precious benefits, and he is engaged in working in them further all the good pleasure of his goodness, and the work of faith with power,—in perfecting that which concerneth them. Though a powerful earthly sovereign made it his special care to raise a favourite individual to worldly possessions and honours, and directed the application of all the resources of his kingdom to the accomplishment of this single end, the power exerted and the means employed in the case would be as nothing, in comparison with the power exerted and the means employed by Christ to advance the subjects of the kingdom of heaven to glory, honour, and immortality. Of all the operations carried on in our world, none is so extensive in its bearing or so momentous in its results, and none comprehends agencies and appliances so numerous and diversified, as the process by which Christ, in the administration of the kingdom of heaven, is subduing sinners to himself, and carrying forward and translating his subjects from a state of grace to a state of glory. This is the grand paramount process of divine providence, to which all its other processes are subordinate; and what claims our special attention here is, that its gracious design is, in every case, infallibly accomplished. Is it not

evident, then, that abundant ground for pronouncing the righteous blessed is afforded by the fact that theirs is the kingdom of heaven?

7. The character and exercises of the righteous afford further ground for pronouncing them blessed. They do so because they prove them to be the subjects of the kingdom of heaven, and the heirs, therefore, of its coming glory. Besides, it is a blessed thing for the righteous that such a character has been wrought in them, and that they have been awakened to such exercises. Is it not a blessed thing for them that they are poor in spirit, neither resting nor capable of resting in the perishing things of this world, but longing for a heavenly inheritance; that, instead of pursuing greedily the polluted pleasures of sin, they are pure in heart, delighting in nothing, either in activity or enjoyment, but what is holy; that, instead of cherishing sin, they have been taught to loathe it, and, mourning because of its presence and its defilement, hunger and thirst after righteousness; that they are no longer of a malignant, resentful, vindictive spirit, but are meek, compassionate, and merciful; that, separated for ever from the ministers of evil, they have become promoters of peace in all its forms,—of the peace of reconciliation with God,—the peace of freedom from unholy, irregular, and insatiable desires,—and the peace of rest in the proper portion of the soul; and that, with noble strength of character and steadfastness of purpose, they are enabled to persevere in their pursuit of righteousness, whatever evils they encounter in pursuing it? Is it not a blessed thing for them that they have experienced such a transformation, and that under the operation of divine grace they have attained to such exalted excellence,—that the fine gold which had become dim, and had been so woefully changed, is in course of being restored in all its purity and brightness?

8. But, as we formerly remarked, it is mainly because future blessedness is attached to the present position of the

righteous that they are pronounced blessed as occupying their present position. Hence, that we may perceive that they are blessed, we must consider the future blessedness that awaits them. And one view given of it is, that, whereas now they mourn because of sin, they shall be comforted; and, whereas they now hunger and thirst after righteousness, they shall be filled. They have been taught to desire earnestly the purification of their character from the defilement of sin, and its renewal after the image of God; and their desire in this respect shall be fully accomplished. Delivered from the body of death, under the burden of which they now groan, they shall be holy as God is holy, and pure as he is pure. While they shall thus be freed from the self-loathing, and from all the distressing exercises connected with the presence of sin, they shall experience the serenity of perfect health and internal peace. There is not in this, indeed, a source of any positive blessedness; but there is the qualification for such blessedness, and that freedom from inward derangement and attendant self-reproach, without which it cannot exist. And we may, we think, go even further than this. Those who hunger and thirst after righteousness cannot, we conceive, when they attain to it, fail to regard this happy result with great satisfaction and joy. Our Lord seems to intimate that they shall so regard it, when he declares that "they shall be filled." They shall not only escape from the painful cravings of hunger and thirst, but shall further experience a high degree of satisfaction. The conception of a perfectly righteous or holy person comprehends entire freedom from all that disturbs or creates any jarring, absolute harmony within, and absolute harmony with the principles and arrangements of the divine government; and, accordingly, you no sooner form the conception of such a person than you see that he must be blessed.

9. A further view given of the blessedness which awaits the righteous, is that "they shall obtain mercy." They have

already obtained mercy, having been justified freely by the grace of God, through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus, and having received gratuitously so many precious benefits. And God will still deal with them in the same merciful and gracious manner. Finally, and to consummate all his dealings of this kind with them, when they appear before his judgment-seat, he will conclusively pronounce the merciful sentence of acquittal and acceptance passed upon them in their justification. They shall not be ashamed before him, therefore, and shall have no cause to fear. They may well be pronounced blessed in reference to such a prospect.

10. According to the representation of our passage, it enters into the blessedness which awaits the righteous, that the kingdom of heaven is theirs, and that they shall inherit the earth. The kingdom of heaven, as we have seen, is already theirs, as regards right, and also by partial occupation and possession; and as it is thus theirs already, they shall, in due time, under the operation of its own laws and influences, attain to full participation in its glory and blessedness—to all that awaits its subjects in the heavenly state—to its beatific vision, its glorious intercourse, and its blissful activities. They shall also inherit the earth. At present the earth is very much in the hands of the wicked, and, besides, it is so corrupted with sin, and so blighted by the curse, that it is unfit for being inherited by the righteous. But the earth that now is shall be burned up, and a new earth, the abode of righteousness, shall be created. This new earth the righteous shall inherit. They are now despitely and injuriously used; but then they shall reign with Christ.

11. In describing the future blessedness of the righteous, Christ further declares that they shall be called the sons of God. Even in this life they *are* the sons of God; but their outward circumstances rather conceal than testify this fact. It will not be so, however, when they attain to the blessed-

ness which awaits them ; they shall then be *called* the sons of God ; their entire condition, and his entire treatment of them, will proclaim that they are his sons. He will himself openly acknowledge them as such, and will exalt them to glory and honour befitting their relation to him. How blessed those whom such exaltation awaits !

12. But what will consummate the blessedness of the righteous is, that they shall see God. Being pure in heart, “made perfect in holiness,” and thus fitted for the beatific vision, that vision will be granted to them. Our bodily wants, and the enjoyment connected with the relief of them, will cease with the present life ; and then we can experience no happiness but such as will flow from the exercise of the powers and the gratification of the tastes and desires of the sanctified soul. Now the sanctified soul will find the most blessed exercise of its powers, and the full gratification of its tastes and desires, eternally, in contemplating, enjoying, and serving God. The righteous are blessed, for they shall see God ; and, when they shall see him, their blessedness, now for the most part future, will be realised and consummated.

### SECTION III.—DETAILED EXPOSITION.

VER. 1, 2.—See Intro., sect. iii. par. 4–6, 11.

*He opened his mouth.*—While the preparatory arrangements for the delivery of the sermon were in course of being made, and during a brief and solemn pause after they were made, our Lord, we may conceive, contemplated the assembled multitudes in silence ; the people, on the other hand, observing him with earnest attention, expecting that he would forthwith address them. Under such circumstances the first act by which he visibly proceeded to address them was marked with no small interest, as at once relieving and heightening expectation, and thus acquired an

historical importance, which procured for it the place which it occupies in the narrative.—(Compare Job iii. 1; Acts viii. 35, x. 34.) At the same time, the circumstances which imparted historical importance to the fact that “he opened his mouth,” gave intimation of a solemn discourse of some length; and the statement that “he opened his mouth,” bearing the impress of the circumstances in which it originated, indirectly conveys this intimation.

*He taught them.*—The object of *teaching* is the communication of knowledge, the communication of it being rendered necessary by ignorance or by error and prejudice (Mark viii. 31, 32) on the part of those who are taught. Our Lord’s teaching on this occasion was rendered necessary by both, but had reference especially to the latter—to prevailing error and prejudice respecting the kingdom of the Messiah.

VER. 3-10.—Those verses form the first member of the sermon. The internal structure of this member has already been developed (see Part I., sect. i. par. 3-8); but it may be proper to present it here at one view:—

- 1 A. | v. 3. Blessed are the poor in spirit; &c.
- 1 B. { 1 a. | v. 4. Blessed are they that mourn; &c.
- 1 b. | v. 5. Blessed are the meek; &c.
- 2 B. { 2 a. | v. 6. Blessed are they which do hunger and thirst
- after righteousness; &c.
- 2 b. | v. 7. Blessed are the merciful; &c.
- 2 A. | v. 8. Blessed are the pure in heart; &c.
- 3 B { 3 b. | v. 9. Blessed are the peacemakers; &c.
- 3 a. | v. 10. Blessed are they which are persecuted; &c.

VER. 3.—*Poor in spirit.*—“In spirit”—*ἐν πνεύματι*—denotes that *in respect of* which the righteous are “poor.” They are pronounced “poor,” not in respect of attainment or possession, but of their spirit. A certain frame and certain exercises of spirit, which are distinctive of the poor, are found with them, and so far, and in this respect, they are such as are properly denominated “the poor.” The manner of

spirit they are of is one of the characteristics to which the designation is attached; and, therefore, in reference to this characteristic, and under the limitation of this reference, it is applicable to them. Accordingly they are here denominated "the poor," not in all respects, and without limitation, but "in spirit." Thus "in spirit" denotes that from the presence of which, and not, as some have held, that from the want of which, "the poor" intended are denominated.

*Poor*, as a detached word, does not distinguish any one kind or form of poverty, or rather, thus left to the natural expansion of its meaning, it denotes poverty of every kind—poverty as a whole; if it does not positively carry the idea to its whole extent, it does not restrict it. Accordingly, if the idea be restricted, if the word be referred and confined to a portion of the space over which, if left wholly free, it would extend its significancy, this must be done by something extraneous to the word itself, *e. g.*, by explanatory parallels, as in Isa. lxvi. 2, or by the circumstances under which it is used. In this latter way its meaning is limited in the passage under consideration. Carnal views were generally entertained respecting the Messiah's kingdom, and it was our Lord's object to correct those views by describing the character of its subjects, and the nature of its privileges; and, of course, the language which he employs receives from this object its specific reference and significancy. Its meaning, so to speak, lies within the limits with which this object circumscribes it. To this extent and from this cause it suffers limitation. Now, if our Lord, when he pronounced the poor in spirit blessed, intended bodily poverty, instead of correcting carnal views he would himself disseminate them. The light in which he presents his kingdom is, that it is not of this world. It is his special design to present it in this light. But if its privileges were attached to bodily poverty, it would, in one important respect, be

decidedly of this world; and if not of this world, in respect of the nature of its privileges also, it would bear a heterogeneous character, and be one-half of this world, and one-half spiritual. On this ground, and in itself, the idea of spiritual privileges attached to a bodily distinction, is utterly inadmissible.

The principle of limitation here, and in all similar cases, is the same as would be felt to operate if, surveying a beautiful landscape, we exclaimed, "How lovely!" The circumstances in which the words were uttered would determine their application and signficancy. No *loveliness* would be thought of but the loveliness proper to a landscape. In like manner, the circumstances in which Christ uttered the words under consideration, determine *their* application and signficancy. Those circumstances contract their meaning within certain limits, and give to them a specific reference.

To determine whether any one is really poor, we must estimate his position with respect to the "true riches." If he possesses these he is rich, of whatever else he may be destitute; and if he does not possess them, or possesses them only to a limited extent, he is poor, whatever else he possesses. Now the subjects of the Messiah's kingdom are poor as possessing the "true riches" only to a limited extent; and, at the same time, their spirit is suitably affected by their state, as being thus poor. It is on this latter ground, on the ground that they are thus "poor in spirit," that they are pronounced blessed.

*The kingdom of heaven.*—See Part I., sect. ii. par. 5, 6.—The kingdom of God, as administered by Christ, is intended.—(Mark i. 14, 15, comp. with Matt. iv. 17; Luke vi. 20, comp. with Matt. v. 3; Luke viii. 10, and Mark iv. 4, comp. with Matt. xiii. 11.)

The kingdom of God under its general aspect, as founded upon the relations in which he stands to us as the Creator and Proprietor of all things—his natural kingdom, as it may

be called, could not be spoken of as at hand, and yet to come, as the kingdom here intended often is (Matt. iv. 17 ; vi. 10) ; for it is an everlasting kingdom which ever ruleth over all. Besides, the administration of it, unmodified, would issue in the ruin of the whole human family, as being rebellious and guilty ; and none, therefore, of that family could be pronounced blessed on the ground that the administration of it would take full effect in their own case.

But God, in his great love, devised and introduced a mediatorial scheme, and placed the sceptre of his kingdom in the hands of the Mediator appointed under this scheme.—(Ps. ii. 6 ; Eph. i. 20–22 ; 1 Cor. xv. 25, 27 ; Matt. xxviii. 18.) Thus, while maintaining unabated and uncompromised the righteousness of his government (Heb. i. 8, 9), he made the administration of it subservient to an economy of mercy : so that the Mediator is at once “a prince and a Saviour.”—(Acts v. 21.)

It is the kingdom of God, as thus administered, that is intended in the passage before us ; and it is, accordingly, called the kingdom of Christ.—(Eph. v. 5 ; Luke i. 3 ; 2 Tim. iv. 1 ; Luke xxii. 30 ; John xviii. 36 ; Col. i. 13.) Here, and in Matthew generally,\* and in him only, it is designated “the kingdom of heaven,” because heaven is the seat of its government.—(Ps. ii. 4, xi. 4 ; Isa. lxvi. 1 ; Acts vii. 49 ; John xviii. 36 ; Heb. viii. 1 ; Acts v. 21.) The administration of this kingdom embraces the whole of the mighty process conducted by Christ on earth, in its bearing both upon his enemies (Ps. ii. 9–12, cx. 1, 2, 5, 6 ; 1 Cor. xv. 25) and upon his people (Ps. cx. 3 ; John xvii. 2 ; Matt. xxviii. 18–20) ; and its eternal issue in the case of both, and, as regards the latter, its eternal issue in the glory and blessedness of heaven.—(Matt. xiii. 40–43, xxv. 34, 41, 46, v. 12, vii. 21.)

\* Not “always,” as Tholuck, if correctly translated, states inadvertently. See Matt. vi. 33, xii. 28, and elsewhere.

The ground on which our Lord pronounces the poor in spirit blessed is, that the kingdom of heaven is “theirs.” They are interested in the whole of the rich provision made for its subjects, and in all their privileges; and they shall participate in its consummated prosperity and glory. It is “theirs,” even in such a sense, in virtue of their union to Christ, that they are kings (1 Pet. ii. 9; Rev. i. 5, v. 10), and shall reign.—(Luke xxii. 29, 30; 2 Tim. ii. 12; Rev. xxii. 5.)

VER. 4.—*They that mourn.*—In the first beatitude, the righteous are described from their relation to their true portion, or rather from the manner in which they are affected by their relation to it; and now they are described from the manner in which they are affected by the state of their character. The defects of their character they regard with sorrow, and they express the sorrow with which they regard them—they “mourn.”

The remarks already made, in maintaining the spiritual nature of the poverty intended in the preceding beatitude, serve equally to evince the spiritual reference of this mourning. That it refers to the state of the character, appears not only from the parallelism (ver. 6), but also from the consideration of the proper cause of spiritual mourning in the case to which the description applies. The condition of the righteous is viewed as distinguished only by what is inseparable from it in the present life. As regards their relation to their proper portion, the evil thus inseparable from their condition is, not that they have not attained to the enjoyment of their proper portion in any measure, but that they have not attained to the full enjoyment of it; and it is as being poor in spirit, not as mourning, that they are properly exercised in reference to this evil. While the believer has a desire to depart and to be with Christ, which is far better, he must be willing to abide until he serve his generation by the will of God.—(Eph. i. 22–26.) But it is as mourning that the

righteous are properly exercised in reference to the defects and blemishes of their character; and, even when they enjoy their proper portion in some measure, they should be thus exercised in reference to them; and then, so far as their mourning respects themselves, they should be thus exercised in reference to them alone. A striking instance and illustration of the mourning of our passage is furnished by the sorrowful cry of the Apostle Paul in Rom. vii., "O wretched man that I am! who shall deliver me from the body of this death?"

*They shall be comforted.*—The promised comfort is, of course, adapted to the mourning. It would not be comfort otherwise. The import of the promise, therefore, is that they shall make progress towards the righteousness from which their sad distance and deviations are the cause of their mourning.

VER. 5.—*The meek.*—When, in the intercourse of social life, the righteous meet with injurious treatment, they bear it with *meekness*. In Psalm xxxvii., which is our beatitude in a developed form, the righteous are expressly represented as exposed to the malice of the wicked (ver. 12, 14), and they are directed, whatever manifestation it may receive, to maintain serene and uniform meekness of spirit and deportment. That this is the meaning of the detailed direction given to them (7, 8), is evident from the promise annexed to it, "The meek shall inherit the earth."—(Ver. 11.) This promise would be unsuitable unless, by pursuing the course prescribed, they should establish for themselves a valid claim to the character of "the meek." Thus, we learn that "the meek" are those who, under injurious treatment, do not indulge or give way to wrath, or resort to retaliation, but rest in the Lord and wait patiently for him until he bring forth their righteousness as the light, and their judgment as the noon-day. They are of a lowly (Eph. iv. 2), gentle (Tit. iii. 2), quiet (1 Pet. iii. 4), patient (1 Tim. vi. 11), and forgiving

spirit (Col. iii. 12, 13), committing themselves, when assailed with wrongs and injustice, to Him that judgeth righteously. —(1 Pet. ii. 23.)

*Shall inherit the earth.*—And he will judge righteously in their case. Their enemies shall in due time be ejected from their usurped possession of the earth, and *they shall possess it as the rightful heirs*; they shall “inherit” it. Placing their cause in the Lord’s hands, they wait for him, and he will appear on their behalf.

The secure possession of the land of Canaan, rendered fully available by the divine blessing, presented to the Jewish mind the full idea of prosperity (Deut. xxx. 15–20; Ps. xxxvii. 3); and, however little it may have been viewed in this light, it was typical of spiritual prosperity.—(Isa. lx. 18–21; Heb. iii. 11, 18, iv. 1–9, xii. 22.) And when, having returned to the Messiah whom they have rejected, they shall be restored to their own land, the Jews will enjoy a high degree of spiritual prosperity.—(Jer. xxxiii. 3–8.) The type and the antitype, so far realised, will synchronise; and in the relation in which the Jews thus stand to Canaan, “the meek,” as a body, stand to the whole earth. They shall be raised to the possession of it, and, at the same time, shall enjoy great spiritual prosperity.—(Rev. xx. 1–4.) Besides, a high destiny seems to await the earth, in which the fulfilment of this promise will be consummated; for the Lord will create new heavens and a new earth, wherein righteousness will dwell (Isa. lxv. 17–25; 2 Pet. iii. 13; Rev. xxi. 1–5); and then he that overcometh shall inherit all things. —(Rev. xxi. 7.)

VER. 6.—*They that hunger and thirst after righteousness.*—This description of the righteous is allied, as will be seen from our view of the structure of the passage, to the description of them in the second beatitude. In that beatitude they are described as *mourning*, being deeply affected with the sad distance from righteousness of character which they

discover in themselves, and also in others. But their grief is not a listless, enervating grief. While they mourn because righteousness—that is, perfect righteousness—is not possessed, perceiving it is attainable, they hunger and thirst after it, desire possession of it with great earnestness. Hunger and thirst are striking images of strong desire. The intensity of their cravings is known, and their appropriateness and significance as images of desire are, therefore, felt in every country, without referring to any peculiarity in the thirst of eastern countries,—a reference the less admissible here, as there is nothing peculiar in their hunger, unless it be that it is characterised by less severity than the hunger of colder climates.

*They shall be filled.*—They shall attain to righteousness in all its fulness. What the law could not do, in that it was weak through the flesh, God, sending his own Son in the likeness of sinful flesh, and for sin, did. He condemned sin in the flesh, that the righteousness of the law might be fulfilled in us, who walk not after the flesh, but after the Spirit. —(Rom. viii. 3, 4.) What was thus God's design in sending his Son, he will accomplish in those who hunger and thirst after righteousness. It is observable that this promise is in advance of the promise in the parallel beatitude, "They shall be comforted." In being "comforted," they should be sustained and consoled, but not wholly delivered from the cause of mourning; but when they should be "filled," they would have no further cause to mourn,—their highest desires would be gratified.

The language of the promise is evidently adapted, as in previous instances, to the figurative representation given of the feature of character, or the particular exercise to which the promise is attached.

VER. 7.—*The merciful.*—In this, as in the third, the parallel beatitude, the righteous are viewed in the light of their social relations. Now, however, those from whom they

received injurious treatment, if not the same individuals, individuals of the same class—the wicked—need their assistance, and, forgiving past injuries, they render it. If they were acting towards their brethren, *mercifulness* would not be the aspect their character would present. It is in dealing with those who have stood, and, as regards their spirit, still stand, in a hostile relation to them, that they have an opportunity for acting a merciful part. It is in forgiving transgressions or injuries, and in bestowing benefits on those that need forgiveness, that mercy is exercised.—(Num. xiv. 18, 19; Exod. xxxiv. 7; Ps. cxxx. 4, 7, 8; Micah vii. 18.)

*Shall obtain mercy.*—See Part I., sect. ii., par. 9. Mercy, from its nature, is exercised gratuitously, in the absence of any claim to its exercise on the part of its objects. The divine mercy, however, communicates its blessings in connection only with appropriate exercises of soul, by means of which it carries along with it our moral nature. Accordingly, it communicates them to those alone who see moral excellence in the exercise of it, and who, therefore, are disposed and desirous to exercise it themselves.

VER. 8.—*The pure in heart.*—A thing is *pure* that is free from all admixture of what is foreign to its own proper nature and character. Thus, water is pure when free from all admixture of what is foreign to the nature of water.—(Heb. x. 23.) Now, the proper character of the heart appears in its having full sympathy with moral and spiritual excellence and beauty (Matt. xxii. 37; Ps. xxxvii. 4, iv. 6, 7, vii. 8, lxxiii. 25–27, lxxxiv. 2, xl. 8, lxvi. 18; Rom. vii. 29); and when this sympathy excludes every opposite tendency, taste, and disposition, the heart is pure. And those whose heart is pure are “pure in heart,” or in respect of the state of their hearts. In this beatitude, as in the first, to which it is parallel, the righteous are viewed as sentient beings, and in the light of their relation to their proper portion; and they are described as possessing the

peculiar excellence of character which qualifies for the enjoyment of it—purity in heart.

*Shall see God.*—See Part I., sect. ii., par. 12. We cannot concur with those who derive the significancy of this expression from the fact, that in eastern countries, in which kings affect an awful seclusion, it was a signal favour when any were permitted to see the king's face. We regard the phraseology as based upon universal human experience, and the nature of the promised issue. And those who take the other view are obliged to fall back on this ground in developing the meaning. We are so constituted, that, to enjoy those whom we love and admire, we must "see" them, we must have actual personal intercourse with them, and thus be in circumstances to observe and experience the manifestation of the excellencies which excite our love and admiration, and that, on the other hand, we enjoy them, if we have such intercourse with them. It is on this ground, with which is to be combined the fact, or which, rather, is to be viewed in the light of the fact, that here the righteous walk by faith, and are not admitted to the full vision of God (1 Cor. xiii. 12), that the expression under consideration rests. Accordingly, to "see God" is to have such a view and experience of his glorious excellencies as to be in a position to enjoy, and as, consequently, actually to enjoy him.

When the question is raised, whether the beatific vision of God is by means of the bodily organ of vision, the proper sphere of this organ seems to be overlooked. It is only objects presented in such light as shines on earth, and capable of reflecting it—and material objects alone are capable of reflecting it—that are discernible by this organ. But God is a Spirit, and not a material object. What power, or whether any, analogous to the power of vision, the spiritual resurrection body (1 Cor. xv. 44) may possess, we are not informed, and it is in vain therefore to inquire; but it is certain that it is not in the exercise of the power

of corporeal vision, which we possess in this life, that the righteous shall see God. It is expressly stated that he cannot be seen thus.—(1 Tim. vi. 16.)

The phraseology under consideration is, doubtless, to be referred to the prevalent and familiar usage of expressing mental and spiritual states and acts by means of terms derived from analogous bodily states and acts. According to this usage, which is rendered necessary by the relation of human language to sense and materialism, when the soul obtains a clear and realising view of a spiritual object, we are said to *see* that object. The term employed is derived from sight, as the intimations of that sense, from their greater fulness and adequacy, as presenting, not mere qualities or effects of objects, such as flavour or sound, but, in a manner, the entire objects themselves, are more analogous and proportionate to such a view.

VER. 9.—*The peacemakers*.—See Part I., sect. i., par. 9.

Christ is “the Prince of peace;” and the *making of peace* is one great object of his mediation.—(Isa. ix. 6, 7; Luke ii. 14.) In prosecuting this object, his people, within certain limits, co-operate with him; and it is those who thus co-operate with him that are here designated “peacemakers,” and pronounced blessed. To understand a *peace* and a *peace-making* in no way specially connected with the design or the operations of the Messiah’s kingdom, is forbidden by the sphere occupied by the entire sermon. See Intro., sect. i.

Peace may be realised in men’s relations or in their experience; and when we speak of *making peace*, we refer to peace as realised in their relations.

The primary and fundamental opposite of *peace* is the anger of God, produced by sin; and until his anger is turned away, and peace with him restored, there can be no true or availing peace of any kind. Christ by his atoning sacrifice not only laid the foundation of peace with God, but procured peace with him as a blessing, to be in due time

issued.—(Col. i. 20, 21; Eph. ii. 14, 16, 17.) He is now engaged in issuing this blessing, and in bringing sinners to that exercise of faith in connection with which it is issued.—(Acts v. 31, ii. 33; Rom. v. 1.) In accomplishing this object he employs the services of his people (Mark xvi. 15; Rom. x. 15); and when, with devotedness and zeal, they render their services, entering warmly into his benevolent and gracious design of peace-making, they assume and sustain the character of “peacemakers.”

And, being “peacemakers” as regards the introduction of peace into men’s relations to God, they become *indirectly peacemakers* as regards the introduction of peace into men’s relations to each other. Peace with God is accompanied by a change of character, which qualifies for the intercourse with him to which it gives admission. This change consists in renewal after his image; and those who are renewed after the image of “the God of peace” (Rom. xvi. 20), must themselves be disposed to peace and promoters of it; they must in this respect be like God, and followers of him.—(Eph. iv. 31–v. 2.) And in receiving forgiveness they learn to forgive. Deeply impressed with the glorious excellency of the character of God as a God that pardoneth (Mic. vii. 18; Neh. ix. 17), they cultivate in themselves the corresponding excellence.

Besides, those who labour to bring men into a state of peace with God will also, from the very same spirit that prompts them to do so, labour *directly* to bring them into a state of peace with each other. But, while the righteous are thus peacemakers within the sphere of men’s relations to each other, it is, we apprehend, as labouring to rectify men’s relations to God, so that they shall become relations of peace, that they are designated “peacemakers.” This is the peace-making to which they are specially called as subjects of the Messiah’s kingdom, and which alone furnishes a sufficient basis for the beatitude. The other branch of

peace-making is, however, to be comprehended in the conception of their character. The designation, "peace-maker," describes their disposition as well as their deeds; and, therefore, embraces in its significancy the entire practical manifestation of their disposition.

*Shall be called the children of God.*—Literally, "the sons of God."

The righteous stand in the relation to God, under one of its forms, to which the designation *son* is attached. They are begotten of him (1 John v. 1); but this is not the ground of their filial relation to him, for it is the high distinction of our Lord that he is "the *only-begotten Son*" of God. Having been "born of God," they bear, though not in this life in full development and perfection, the character proper to sons (Col. iii. 10; 1 John ii. 29, iii. 8–10); but it is by adoption, founded on their union to Christ, and thus connected with their faith, that they are brought into the relative position of sons.—(Gal. iv. 5; Eph. i. 5; John i. 12.)

Having been brought into this position, the righteous are heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ (Rom. viii. 17); and shall, accordingly, in due time, be exalted to the full and eternal possession of the inheritance reserved for them in heaven.—(Rom. viii. 17, 18; 1 Pet. i. 3, 4.) And, that their character may be fitted for this inheritance, they are subjected to a sanctifying process, comprehending the mighty agency of the Spirit as the spirit of life and holiness, and the working of all things together for their good.—(Rom. viii. 2–4, 28, 29.) In the meantime, until all that is in progress be effected, and all that is in prospect be realised, they are kept by the power of God.—(1 Pet. i. 5.)

For the idea conveyed by "called" in our passage, see Part I., sect. ii., par. 11.

God is in Christ reconciling the world to himself (2 Cor. v. 19); and hence "the peacemakers" are followers of

God, as dear children.—(Eph. v. 1; comp. iv. 32 and v. 2.) The only begotten Son of God is also engaged in making peace.—(Col. i. 20; Eph. ii. 14–17.) It is, indeed, in virtue of his office and mission as the great peacemaker that the Son personally has become known to us. There is thus an evident propriety in the arrangement, that those who, as peacemakers, co-operate with the Son and bear his image, should, in connection with this co-operation and resemblance, be themselves recognised, and should become known as “the sons of God.” Peace-making is God’s great paternal work in our world. It is in this work that he appears specially as a father, and that the Son appears specially as a son; accordingly, it is when, in their sphere, they zealously prosecute this work, that believers act most distinctively the part of “sons of God;” and, therefore, it is altogether congruous that, in connection with their prosecution of it, they should “be called” his sons—openly and fully acknowledged as such. Thus, the promise in this case, no less, we conceive, than in the others, is beautifully adapted, though in virtue of a more profound relation, which, because profound, has not been perceived, to the distinction of character to which it is attached.

VER. 10.—*Persecuted for righteousness’ sake.*—See Part I., sect. i., par. 11; and on ver. 11, 12.

It is not as being “persecuted” that the righteous are here pronounced “blessed;” but because their “righteousness” has become so mature and prominent, that it provokes the hostility and persecution of a righteousness-hating world. The force of this beatitude, therefore, is, that those who have attained to so high an advancement in righteousness, that, while their whole deportment is amiable and beneficent,—that of “peacemakers,”—the world hates and persecutes them—that all such are blessed, notwithstanding the persecutions with which they are assailed.

*Theirs is the kingdom of heaven.*—See Part I., sect. ii., par. 5, 6.

There is an evident propriety in presenting this fact as a ground of blessedness in the case of the “persecuted.” The consideration of the kingdom of heaven assures the poor in spirit of the fulness of fruition and blessedness, and it assures the persecuted of ultimate triumph and security. The poor in spirit and the persecuted are both in depressing circumstances, and to both, therefore, the most elevating view is presented,—that of a kingdom, the kingdom of heaven; and the most elevating announcement is made, that this kingdom is theirs.

## PART II.—(B.) VER. 11–20.

## SECTION I.—BLESSEDNESS ATTACHED TO RIGHTEOUSNESS.

—(B.a.) 11, 12.

1. Blessedness—perfect and consummated blessedness—awaits the righteous as the righteous. The meritorious cause, indeed, of this blessedness is the righteousness of Christ, with which they are invested, and not the righteousness of their own character; but all those, and those only, who are distinguished by personal righteousness, are invested with the righteousness of Christ; and, therefore, the established order of the kingdom of heaven, that whom God justifies, as being invested with the righteousness of Christ, them he also glorifies (Rom. viii. 30), infallibly secures the blessedness of all who are distinguished by personal righteousness.

2. Personal righteousness is the qualification for blessedness; and when God imparts the former, he will also impart the latter. The fact that he has imparted the former, discovers that it is his purpose to impart the latter. The two are thus connected in God's design and in his mode of dealing with his people, while, in their own nature, they sustain a close relation to each other.

3. But some different and further connection is intimated when the future blessedness of the righteous is spoken of as "their reward"—"Rejoice and be exceeding glad; for great is your reward in heaven." It cannot be "*their* reward," strictly speaking, for, as we have already observed, it is not on account of their own personal righteousness

that it is adjudged to them, but on account of the righteousness of Christ, which is theirs by faith. There is, however, a proportion between their future blessedness and their attainments in righteousness in this life; for God will give to every man according to his deeds (Rom. ii. 6-10); as, in the parable, to the servant who with the pound entrusted to him gained *ten* pounds, authority was given over *ten* cities, and to the servant who with a similar sum gained *five* pounds, authority was given over *five* cities.—(Luke xix. 12-19, 24-26.)

4. And, besides, the bestowal of future blessedness, and, it would seem, the form of it, will have a distinct reference to the practice of righteousness in this life. This may be gathered from the terms in which our Lord describes, in the preceding member of the sermon, the future blessedness of his subjects—those that *mourn* shall be *comforted*, those that *hunger* and *thirst* shall be *filled*, the *meek* shall *inherit the earth*, the *merciful* shall *obtain mercy*. The Judge, in awarding the blessedness under consideration, will explicitly testify his approbation of the pursuit and practice of righteousness, by which those to whom he awards it were distinguished: “Then shall the King say unto those on his right hand, Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world: for I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in: naked, and ye clothed me: I was sick, and ye visited me: I was in prison, and ye came unto me.”—(Matt. xxv. 34-36.)

5. And, further still, the righteous are encouraged to look forward to future blessedness, as they contend with the difficulties and endure the hardships of the pursuit and the maintenance of righteousness. “Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake. Rejoice, and be exceeding glad; for great is your reward in heaven.”—(Ver. 11,

12.) To each of them Christ says, "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life."—(Rev. ii. 10.)

SECTION II.—BLESSEDNESS ATTACHED TO RIGHTEOUSNESS ONLY.

—(B.b.) 13–20.

1. The necessity of righteousness now claims attention. In the character of God righteousness is *absolutely* necessary, that is, necessary irrespectively altogether of circumstances and ends. It could not be otherwise than that God, whose nature is necessarily perfect, should be righteous. But in the character of man righteousness is only relatively necessary. Man being a creature is defectible; there is nothing in his nature that excludes the possibility of his being unrighteous. He must, however, be righteous, that he may attain to blessedness, and serve the great ends of his being. This relative necessity of righteousness in his case arises from the constitution of his nature, and his position as a subject of the divine government.

2. That man may attain to blessedness, it is both *judicially* and *morally* necessary that he be righteous. It is judicially necessary, for it is only to the righteous that God as the judge of all will award and dispense blessedness; and morally necessary, for it is only the righteous that are morally in a capacity to enjoy blessedness.

3. The moral necessity of righteousness, which we shall first evince, is a necessity of adaptation. The portion provided for man, and from which alone he can derive blessedness, is of a definite nature; and, that he may enjoy it and derive blessedness from it, there must be a perfect adaptation to it in his character. We may the more easily appreciate this species of necessity, as innumerable illustrations of it present themselves on every hand. Water is an element of a definite character, and we find an exact adaptation to it in the structure and constitution of animals

formed to live in it,—in the temperature of their blood, in the form of their bodies, and in all their organs. Without this adaptation they could not live in it. In like manner, the circumstances of animals that live on dry land are of a definite character, and we find an exact adaptation to them in the structure and constitution of such animals, and, besides, a superadded adaptation in the case of each family to its own peculiar position and sphere. In these cases, again, such adaptation is clearly necessary. Now, the *moral* necessity of righteousness in human character is an analogous necessity. That man may derive blessedness from his appointed portion, he must be righteous. Righteousness is necessary to adapt him to it, as the distinctive structure and constitution of animals are necessary to adapt them to their respective elements.

4. That we may perceive this, we must ascertain what constitutes his appointed portion, or, in other words, wherein his proper blessedness consists. At present, in multitudes of instances, his happiness, so far as it goes, or to a great extent, springs from his use and application of temporal things. The power of ministering to him, however, which such things possess, will terminate with this life; it is only during his sojourn on earth that he is capable of any appropriation or enjoyment of them. What, then, when all that is temporal has ceased to minister to him, will remain and be fitted to afford him enjoyment? Nothing, evidently, that is not adapted to his soul—to his spiritual nature. He will then be subject to none of the wants which have their origin in the body; and those things only, therefore, that are adapted to his spiritual nature will be capable of affording him enjoyment. Such things may probably be comprehended under the following heads:—Proper objects of contemplation, proper society, and proper exercises. This classification affords at least a sufficient exhibition of them for our present purpose. It is only the beauty and excel-

lence of objects of contemplation that can impart to them the power of affording enjoyment; and it is only moral and spiritual beauty and excellence that are adapted to our spiritual nature. What objects of contemplation will be presented to the righteous we learn from the statements, that they shall see God, and that theirs is the kingdom of heaven. They are God, the Father, Son, and Holy Spirit; their fellow-subjects, angelic and human; the glorious results of divine love, wisdom, and power, in their own case and in that of their fellow-subjects; and all the arrangements, and procedure, and the entire aspect of the kingdom of heaven. But the righteous will not occupy the position of mere spectators, or stand apart and only contemplate. They will have full and unceasing communion with God; he will impart himself to them, and they will enjoy the society of angels and of saints, united to them in the bonds of mutual and exalted love. As to their exercises, they will be engaged in the contemplation to which we have already adverted, they will cherish the affections which it is fitted to awaken, and they will take part unceasingly in the communion and intercourse of heaven, and in the songs of praise and joy which form its worship.

5. Such are the sources from which blessedness will flow; and is it not evident that the righteous alone can derive blessedness from them? The righteous alone will contemplate with admiration and delight the glorious character and ways of God, the glorious manifestations of his character which the character and the condition of angels and of glorified saints will afford, and the constitution, arrangements, and provisions of the kingdom of heaven; the righteous alone will take pleasure in the society of that kingdom, and in its worship, and in its activities. There is a similar necessity for righteousness in this case, as there is for the power of vision that we may see, or for a sound state of the organ of hearing that we may hear. Righteousness is the

qualification for deriving blessedness from the proper sources of blessedness, no less than reason is the qualification for weighing arguments and drawing conclusions. It is righteousness that adapts to the portion in which blessedness is to be found, as much as it is the different structures and constitutions of animals that adapt them to their respective elements and spheres.

6. Righteousness is also *judicially* necessary, or necessary from the fact that it is only to the righteous that God will award and dispense blessedness. The right which he acknowledges in awarding it is founded on the righteousness of Christ, which is unto all and upon all who believe. But all who believe, and who, consequently, are clothed in the righteousness of Christ, are distinguished by personal righteousness. With the righteousness which is by faith personal righteousness is always associated. Accordingly, as it is only to believers that God awards blessedness, he awards it only to those who are personally righteous. It is not exactly, however, this view of the necessity of righteousness that we wish now to present. Though it is not on account of their personal righteousness that God bestows blessedness on believers, yet in bestowing it he expresses his approbation of them as being personally righteous. He bestows it in the exercise of complacency in them, no less than in the exercise of justice. As he proceeds to bestow it, he addresses them in terms of cordial commendation, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant." The bestowal of it, indeed, necessarily implies such commendation. We can conceive of a judge moved by a regard to justice to pronounce a righteous sentence, while he feels no interest in the result; but, while God is moved by a regard to justice to pronounce a righteous sentence upon his people, at the same time, from his high approbation of their character and his complacency in them, his bowels yearn to impart to them the blessedness in which the execution of that sentence

will result. The bestowal of blessedness being thus a declaration on the part of God of entire approbation and complacency, it is only on the righteous it can be bestowed, for it is only with respect to them that such a declaration can be emitted.

7. There is also, as was formerly observed, a proportion between the "reward in heaven" and the personal righteousness of those on whom it is bestowed; and, accordingly, where there is no personal righteousness, this reward cannot be bestowed, even in the lowest degree.

8. Righteousness, thus morally and judicially necessary that man may attain to blessedness, is necessary also that, suitably to his rational nature, he may serve the great ends of his being. We serve those ends by glorifying God, and by prosecuting the subordinate ends by the accomplishment of which he is to be glorified. The fact of our being, and the manner in which we are and will be dealt with, glorify God, independently of any intention to that effect on our part; but, that we may glorify him suitably to our rational nature, it must be our purpose and aim to glorify him; we must honour him by entertaining worthy views of him and loving him supremely, and by declaring, not only in words, as there may be occasion, but also in the more convincing language of our whole character and deportment, that we entertain such views of him, and regard him with such love; we must acknowledge him in our hearts and by our practice as our glorious Sovereign, entitled to the highest homage and service that our nature in its best estate is capable of rendering to him, and even to higher homage and service. Now, to glorify God thus is to be righteous; and therefore, of course, the righteous only glorify him thus.

9. Of the subordinate ends by the accomplishment of which God is glorified, the chief is the salvation of sinners. If we labour sincerely to promote this end, we look upon sin, from which salvation brings deliverance, as a hateful and destruc-

time evil, and upon peace with God, renewal after his image, and the enjoyment of him, the great benefits in which salvation consists, as inestimably precious; we regard our fellow-men with love and compassion; and, in all our efforts on their behalf, we are zealous for the glory, guided by the directions, and encouraged by the promises, of God. Now, to be of such a spirit, and under the influence of such views, and to pursue such a course, is, again, to be righteous.

10. It is by the diffusion and application of the truth, in faith and with prayer, that we are to seek the salvation of sinners. This is life eternal, that they might *know* the only true God, and Jesus Christ, whom he hath sent.—(John xvii. 3.) Men in their natural state are spiritually enslaved, and it is the truth that makes them free (John viii. 32); and it is by the truth that believers are sanctified.—(John xvii. 17.) Those that would diffuse and apply the truth, with a view to the salvation of others, must themselves know, and should love it. If they do not love it, cherishing its influence in their hearts, and subjecting their lives to its control, they are guilty of great practical inconsistency in recommending it to others, and they but half recommend it. They withhold from it the recommendation of a due appreciation of it on their own part, without which God, who looks on the heart, will not accept their outward and only seeming recommendation of it.

We should corroborate and enforce by our practice the instructions by which we endeavour to enlighten our fellow-men, and to promote their spiritual interests. Our conduct should proclaim that we have ourselves embraced the truth which we urge them to embrace; it should illustrate its beneficial operation and effects; it should show that we deem it necessary to obey, as well as to know and receive it.

It is to this exhibition of the truth, by instruction and example, that Christ refers, when he describes the subjects of his kingdom as “the light of the world” (ver. 14); and it is

evident, from the view which has been given of the fulfilment of their office as sustaining this character, that to fulfil it is to be righteous.

11. Believers occupy such a position, one so prominent and conspicuous, that, if they should not exert an influence favourable to the truth and beneficial to their fellow-men, they would unavoidably exert an opposite influence. If their example should not serve to recommend true religion, it would excite prejudice against it, and confirm the prejudice already existing. On this ground Christ compares them to "a city set on a hill, which cannot be hid."—(ver. 14.) In such a situation they must be righteous, that they may not be instruments of evil.

There is a lower, but kindred office, which believers sustain. While they are "the light of the world," they are also "the salt of the earth."—(ver. 13.) Under the former character, it is their office to promote saving knowledge; and under the latter, to counteract the tendency towards deeper and deeper corruption, which arises partly from the law of our nature, under the operation of which principles are strengthened by activity and exercise, and partly from the power of example, which greatly promotes the prevalence of the traits of character, and the practices it exhibits. To this tendency believers must oppose the influence and the efforts of righteousness. It is righteousness that gives to them their "savour"—their antiseptic and preserving power. And while, if they should lose the "savour" of righteousness, they should be unfit for fulfilling their office as "the salt of the earth," their own condition would be hopeless. There would be no influence then to preserve themselves, any more than others, from utter putrefaction. "If the salt have lost its savour, wherewith shall it be salted?" The result would necessarily be, their rejection from the place and the privileges of the righteous.

12. Such are the grounds on which righteousness is neces-

sary :—*1st*, That we may attain to blessedness; for, if we be not righteous, we are incapable of blessedness, and God will not award it to us; and, *2d*, That we may serve the great ends of our being, glorifying God, and, in subserviency to his glory, prosecuting the inferior ends he prescribes to us, and particularly the chief of these, the salvation of our fellow-sinners, diffusing, as “the light of the world,” the knowledge that makes wise unto salvation, and, as “the salt of the earth,” counteracting the tendency of human character to corruption.

13. There is a further ground on which righteousness is necessary. It is not presented, however, in the sermon, and we shall therefore only advert to it in passing. Our passage sets forth the necessity of righteousness to the attainment of blessedness, and to the fulfilment of the great ends of our being. It is thus the necessity of it as an *antecedent* that is set forth. It must precede, that the fulfilment of the great ends of our being, and blessedness may follow. But it is necessary also as a *consequent*. It must follow from the influences and the dealings that precede. Christ regenerates and sanctifies his people, and hence it necessarily follows that they shall be righteous. He purifies them unto himself a peculiar people, zealous of good works.—(Tit. ii. 14.) They are born of God, and “whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin, for his seed remaineth in him, and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.”—(1 John iii. 9.)

14. Righteousness being thus necessary,—necessary on the various grounds that have been indicated,—must have been enjoined in the divine law. That it should be necessary and not enjoined, would involve a contradiction. We find, accordingly, that it has been enjoined; and, conversely, from this fact we may argue the necessity of it. As, on the one hand, being necessary, it must have been enjoined; so, on the other, having been enjoined, it must be necessary.

15. But here, at the outset, we encounter, at the hands

of some, a denial of the position on which our argument is founded,—the position, namely, that the law is still in force. They maintain that, as regards believers, the law has been set aside—that it has been virtually repealed, and possesses therefore no authority. This doctrine our Lord expressly and emphatically repudiates in our passage, “Think not that I am come to destroy the law or the prophets; I am not come to destroy, but to fulfil; for verily I say unto you, till heaven and earth pass, one jot or one tittle shall in nowise pass from the law till all be fulfilled.”—(ver. 17, 18.) We might, therefore, at once dismiss it, refusing to honour it with a moment’s consideration; for, in the face of such a deliverance with respect to it, it can have no claim to any other treatment than instant and peremptory rejection. As, however, it is a doctrine to the practical adoption of which our corrupt hearts are very prone, and those are sometimes to be met with who have adopted it into their creed, and cling to it with great tenacity, it may be well to show, briefly, that it is utterly unreasonable, as well as directly opposed to the teaching of Scripture.

16. If as regards believers the law has been repealed, God does not require that they be conformed to the law in character and conduct, that is, that they be righteous; and, if he does not require that they be righteous, he does not forbid that they be unrighteous, but it is a matter of indifference to him what character they bear. Though their hearts throb with the vilest affections, and their lives be overrun with the grossest enormities, it will not be offensive to him, and it will be in no degree well-pleasing to him though they rise to the highest excellence in all holy conversation and godliness. He that can believe this, let him believe it. God can no more deny himself, or place his holiness and justice in abeyance by such indifference to the character of his people and of their actions, than he can cease to be what he is. He can no more *do* otherwise than

hate and forbid sin, than he can be otherwise than holy and just.

17. Is God regardless of the welfare of his people; and, while they cannot be happy unless they be righteous, does he notwithstanding leave them, without so much as opposing the check of a prohibition, to plunge themselves, if that should be their infatuated choice, into unrighteousness and ruin? But, indeed, if this doctrine were true, unrighteousness would not entail ruin. If it is not forbidden, it will not be punished; and it is only as punishment that there can be misery. And if unrighteousness does not entail ruin, righteousness is not necessary to blessedness. If we are not miserable, we shall be blessed; there is no intermediate experience. And, therefore, if the unrighteous will not be miserable, they shall be blessed, though unrighteous. Here, however, we meet with a strange inconsistency. According to this doctrine, the state of the law is such that righteousness is not necessary to blessedness; and yet the constitution of our nature is such that righteousness is necessary to it. How is this disagreement to be accounted for? Has God, as our lawgiver, abolished what, as our creator, he still upholds? Has he erased from the law the requirement of righteousness, while he has not erased it from the constitution of our nature, and enforces it in our experience? We have already seen that without righteousness we cannot attain to the blessedness of heaven, but it is evident further that without it we cannot escape present wretchedness. Do not the unrighteous experience the accusations of conscience, and not unfrequently the agony of remorse? Are they not smitten with shame when they find their vileness exposed to the gaze and visited with the reprobation of their fellow-men? How often do their vicious courses issue in disease, and poverty, and degradation? And do not numerous cases occur among them, that cannot escape notice or be mistaken, of total dilapidation

and debasement of character—cases in which humanity is so scathed and blasted, that the spectacle presented is at once the most melancholy and the most appalling to be witnessed in this world? Unrighteousness is thus punished by the operation of the constitution of our nature; and this operation of it is not suspended in the case or in favour of believers any more than of others. Are we, then, to be told that, while it is punished, it is not forbidden? Punishment is a sanction with which law is enforced; apart from law it has no significance and can have no place. Are we, notwithstanding, to be told that, while punishment is still inflicted, the law has been abrogated?

18. The constitution of our nature exhibits also in its operation the counterpart of this condemnation and punishment of unrighteousness; it demands righteousness, and rewards it. Are we not conscious of a testimony within us in favour of righteousness? Does not the voice of reason and conscience distinctly proclaim in our bosom that the path of righteousness is the path we ought to pursue? And, when we pursue it, is there not a sentence of approval pronounced upon us by the same inward authority, and do we not experience a calm and satisfaction which clearly indicate that we have proceeded so far according to the requirement of our nature—the kind of feeling awakened by things congenial and appropriate? And in the case of believers this inward law becomes more distinct and full, and this experience of an immediate recompense is greatly extended. While God thus writes his law upon their hearts, and teaches them to reverence its authority and delight in the service which it enjoins, is it to be imagined that in their case it is stripped of its authority and become a dead letter? Can the character which he impresses upon them, and the longing after righteousness which he awakens in their souls, be thus in contradiction to the economy under which he has placed them? At the very time at which he

writes his law upon their hearts, does he, as regards them, erase it from the external code? Does he teach them to cry out with great earnestness, "O that my ways were directed to keep thy statutes," while he has left them no statutes to keep? And when they "hunger and thirst after righteousness," do they pursue a mere phantom, labouring to maintain and cultivate a character which they are not required to possess?

19. If the law were repealed as regards believers, it would be necessary, in order to prevent this contradiction and inconsistency, that the constitution of their nature should be so changed that they should not deem it their duty to walk in the ways of righteousness, or to avoid the ways of sin, and should not experience any feelings of self-approbation or any beneficial result when they walked in the former, or any feeling of self-reproach or any disadvantageous result when they walked in the latter. But such a change, it is very evident, would strip them of the character and depose them from the rank of moral beings.

20. It thus follows indubitably from the character of God, from the constitution of our nature, from the moral judgments which it leads us to form and pronounce, and from the results in our inward consciousness, in our outward experience, and in the state of our character, with which righteous and sinful actions are respectively attended, that the law neither has been nor could be abrogated. Accordingly, in the New Testament we find throughout, to its very close, no less than in the Old, a distinct recognition, implication, and assertion of the authority of the law, and the constant recurrence of its requirements, and of kindred exhortations, directions, warnings, reproofs, and threatenings.

21. In the portion of the New Testament which now engages our attention—the sermon on the mount—it is Christ's special object to place it beyond doubt, that in his

kingdom, whatever opposite or different view might be groundlessly taken, the law, with unimpaired authority, and without curtailment, as taking cognisance not only of the outward actions, to which the prevalent glosses restricted its requirements, but also of the thoughts and intents of the heart, should be the rule of conduct to his subjects, and the rule of government to himself. His subjects would hunger and thirst after the righteousness which the law enjoins, nor would even persecution repel or divert them from the zealous practice and cultivation of it; and he would dispense to them the blessedness which the law attaches to righteousness—he would dispense it to them even in this life in some measure, but after this life in all its fulness as a great reward in heaven.

The view given in the parable of the talents of the administration of Christ's kingdom, clearly implies the authority and enforcement of the law. It represents his subjects as divided into good and faithful servants, and wicked and slothful servants; and, of course, there would be no ground for such a distinction if they were without law. If they were without law, they could not, indeed, be servants of any kind. And, further, it represents the good and faithful servants as richly rewarded, and the wicked and slothful servants as visited with merited punishment; that is, it represents the one class and the other as dealt with according to the law.

22. If the community formed by Christ were without law, how could it be called a kingdom, as it is continually in the gospels? The injunctions and enforcement of law are essential to the idea of a kingdom. And how could Christ himself be called Lord if he claimed no service from his people, and if his people, therefore, owed him none? Indeed, the entire phraseology of Scripture, and the conceptions which its phraseology conveys, are altogether inconsistent with the view that the law has been abrogated.

23. But, in addition to the arguments of a somewhat inferential character, but none the less conclusive on that account, which have now been adduced, we have direct proof that the law has not been abrogated. It is in the case of believers that it is contended it has been abrogated; but, in direct contradiction to this doctrine, we find that believers are required and exhorted to obey it, that promises suspended on obedience are made to them, and that they are threatened with penal evil if they disobey.

24. "If ye love me," says Christ himself, "keep my commandments." And if any suspicion could for a moment be entertained, that Christ's commandments are any other than those of the law, it will soon be dissipated by a reference to the detailed precepts of the epistles, all of them addressed to believers. Let us take a brief survey of those precepts. "Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind, that ye may prove what is that good, and acceptable, and perfect will of God." What occasion could persons without law have to prove and ascertain what the will of God is? With respect to such persons the will of God could not at all be spoken of; for by the will of God in this case is meant his will as declared in the law. "Let love be without dissimulation." "Love is the fulfilling of the law," and could not, therefore, be required in the case of persons without law. "Abhor that which is evil; cleave to that which is good." If the law were abrogated, the distinction between good and evil would of course be wholly disregarded. "Be not slothful in business; fervent in spirit; serving the Lord; rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer; distributing to the necessity of saints; given to hospitality. Bless them which persecute you: bless, and curse not. Recompense to no man evil for evil. Provide things honest in the sight of all men. If it be possible, as much as lieth in you, live peaceably with all men."—(Rom.

xii. 2, 9, 11-14, 17, 18.) "Putting away lying, speak every man truth with his neighbour; for we are members one of another. Be ye angry, and sin not: let not the sun go down upon your wrath: neither give place to the devil. Let him that stole steal no more: but rather let him labour, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth. Let no corrupt communication proceed out of your mouth, but that which is good to the use of edifying, that it may minister grace unto the hearers. And grieve not the holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption. Let all bitterness, and wrath, and anger, and clamour, and evil speaking, be put away from you, with all malice: and be ye kind one to another, tender-hearted, forgiving one another, even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you. But fornication, and all uncleanness, or covetousness, let it not be once named among you, as becometh saints; neither filthiness, nor foolish talking, nor jesting, which are not convenient: but rather giving of thanks."—(Eph. iv. 25-32; v. 3, 4.) "Let every soul be subject unto the higher powers. Render to all their dues: tribute to whom tribute is due; custom to whom custom; fear to whom fear; honour to whom honour. Owe no man any thing, but to love one another."—(Rom. xiii. 1, 7, 8.) "Wives, submit yourselves unto your own husbands, as unto the Lord. Husbands, love your wives, even as Christ also loved the church. Children, obey your parents in the Lord: for this is right. Honour thy father and thy mother, that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest live long on the earth. And, ye fathers, provoke not your children to wrath: but bring them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord. Servants, be obedient to them that are your masters according to the flesh. And, ye masters, do the same things unto them."—(Eph. v. 22, 25; vi. 1-5, 9.) All these precepts occur in the New Testament, and are addressed specially

to believers (see Rom. i. 7, xii. 1; and Eph. i. 1, ii. 13-22, iv. 1); and if, notwithstanding, believers are "without law," the whole human family is without law, and has always been so.

25. And to the precepts of the law, thus addressed to believers, the sanction of the law is attached. Life, promised to obedience as the gift of God, and death, threatened as the punishment of sin, constitute this sanction. And life is promised to obedience in the context: "Blessed are they that are persecuted for righteousness' sake: for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." To the same purpose the Apostle Peter says, "If ye do these things, ye shall never fall: for so an entrance shall be ministered unto you abundantly into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."—(2 Pet. i. 10, 11.) As regards the other branch of the sanction of the law, it is expressly declared that "the wages of sin is death."—(Rom. vi. 23.) "Let no man," says the Apostle Paul, "deceive you with vain words: for because of these things cometh the wrath of God upon the children of disobedience."—(Eph. v. 6.) And elsewhere, after recounting the works of the flesh, namely, "adultery, fornication, uncleanness, lasciviousness, idolatry, witchcraft, hatred, variance, emulations, wrath, strife, seditions, heresies, envyings, murders, drunkenness, revellings, and such like," he emphatically testifies that "they which do such things shall not inherit the kingdom of God."—(Gal. v. 19-21.) Thus, it is only "to them who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory, honour, and immortality," that God will render "eternal life;" and "unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness," he will render "indignation and wrath; tribulation and anguish, upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile; but glory, honour, and peace, to every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile."—(Rom. ii. 6-10.)

26. When we survey such clear, and, as it would seem, irresistible evidence, that believers are "not without law to God, but under law to Christ" (1 Cor. ix. 21), we cannot but wonder that the antinomian view of their position could ever be taken. It has, however, been taken; and the explanation of the fact is to be found in distorted conceptions of general principles, and erroneous reasoning from them, in dislike of the restraints which the law imposes and the holiness which it requires, and, to a certain extent, in a love of singularity and an ambition to be distinguished from the adherents of the common belief. There is doubtless a feeling on the part of some that it is a vulgar, inglorious thing to believe as the great bulk of professing Christians have always believed, and that if they would distinguish themselves as persons of independent mind, they must at least choose a path that is but little trodden, and not upon any account walk in the crowd; whereas the only true glory in the case is the glory of duly appreciating the evidence and duly recognising the claims of the truth.

27. Seeing that the believer is "not without law to God, but under law to Christ," it may be inquired in what sense we are to understand the important declaration, that "he is not under the law but under grace."—(Rom. vi. 14.) That we may satisfy this inquiry, it is necessary to bear in mind that the law fulfils a twofold office; it prescribes the condition on which life is promised, and it presents the standard of moral excellence in man. Now, Christ has fulfilled the condition on which life is promised, and, therefore, those who believe on him are not under the law as prescribing that condition. But Christ has not freed—it would, indeed, be impossible and not desirable to free them from the obligation and necessity of conformity to the standard of moral excellence which the law presents, and, therefore, they are under the law as presenting that standard. If

the law be viewed as prescribing the condition on which the promise of life is suspended, believers "are not under the law, but under grace;" but, if the law be viewed as presenting the standard of moral excellence in man, they are "not without law to God, but under law to Christ." What follows from the fact that they are not under the law, viewed in the former light, is, not that they are not under it, but that they are in a position to attain to conformity to it, viewed in the latter light. God having condemned sin in the flesh, and the law of the spirit of life in Christ Jesus having made them free from the law of sin and death, the righteousness of the law will be fulfilled in them.

28. Personal righteousness or holiness being necessary, indispensably necessary, the expectation of blessedness without righteousness is utterly fallacious. This expectation is met with under two forms—as an indolent, uninquiring, ignorant hope, and as the result of a distinct and avowed belief. But whatever form it may assume, it is proved to be delusive by the views that have been presented, and must terminate in disappointment and shame. It is impossible from the constitution of our nature that we should attain to blessedness without righteousness. Righteousness is the qualification for blessedness; and the unrighteous, therefore, can no more attain to blessedness than the blind can see, or the deaf hear, or the dumb speak. And, further, God will not bestow upon the unrighteous the great reward, and thus deal with them in a manner expressive of his approbation and complacency. His judgment is ever according to truth. What he requires as our lawgiver, he will not dispense with as our judge.

How diligent should we be, then, in cultivating righteousness! Other things claim our attention as being necessary for a short season; but righteousness is necessary as the qualification for eternal blessedness. If we do not attain to it, we shall be utterly incapable of the pleasures which are at

God's right hand for evermore, and will, by this incapacity, as well as by the judgment of God, be excluded from the enjoyment of them. And, apart from the necessity of righteousness on this ground, should we not be anxious to build up and beautify our own character? How unimportant is the improvement of outward possessions in comparison with the improvement of ourselves! While the earth and the works that are therein shall be burnt up, the fear of the Lord endureth for ever.

#### SECTION III.—DETAILED EXPOSITION.

VER. 11.—*When men shall revile you, &c.*—Here Christ asserts in reference to his hearers, whom he now addresses in the second person, that righteousness is attended with blessedness. He announces to them that as all the righteous are blessed, so they are blessed on the supposition that they are righteous, and eminently blessed when their righteousness provokes, and they bear with unshaken steadfastness, the severest persecution. Before he only intimated who they are that are blessed; but now, addressing those before him, he asserts that *they*, on the supposition that they are righteous, are blessed, and blessed in proportion to their righteousness. There is thus an emphasis on the *copula*—on the connection of the blessedness of the predicate with the righteousness of the subject; and, accordingly, the verb is no longer left to be understood, as in the preceding context.

“Revile,” &c., serves to present the full idea of the persecution intended. By *persecution* we usually understand acts of oppression and violence. Such acts, in the persecution here intended, would be preceded by *reviling*, in which the persecutors would not only give vent to their rage until they could proceed further, but also, by criminating the righteous, seek to justify themselves. The sentence of condemnation, pronounced upon the righteous in this *reviling*, would ultimately

be executed in actual *persecution*. Thus, "They shall revile you and persecute"—the supplement *you* is better omitted after "persecute"—presents the idea of *reviling carried into effect*. And, further, over against this *executed reviling*—a public proceeding in which the persecutors would deal directly with the persecuted—there would be concurrently, in the ordinary intercourse of life—the persecutors now dealing with others to the prejudice of the persecuted—the "speaking of all manner of evil against" the righteous. That the object in those details is to describe the persecution, is evident from the reference made to it in the next verse as a persecution of which the character was now known—"So persecuted they," &c.

*Falsely*.—Lying, uttering falsehood. This restriction seems to have "common reference"\* to the public reviling, carried out in acts of persecuting violence, and to the secret slandering, representing the persecutors as uttering only falsehood in both.

*For my sake*.—This second limitation has evidently a common reference. The persecution described would be, in its whole extent, persecution "for the sake of Christ." It would be for what they saw in them of Christ, or because they belonged to him (Mark ix. 41), maintained his claims (Acts ii. 36, 37, vii. 52, 54, iv. 10–18), and bore his image (1 John iii. 12, 13), that the persecutors should "revile," &c., the righteous.

There is no redundancy, as has been supposed, in saying they should revile them both "falsely" and "for the sake of Christ." For, when it is said that men should revile them "for the sake of Christ," the object is to characterise, not the *matter* of the reviling, but the *incentive* to it. They should hate them for the sake of Christ, and, under the influence of this hatred, they should revile them, &c., "falsely." In the parallel passage, Luke distinctly traces this progression—

\* On the subject of "common reference," see Boys's *Tactica Sacra*.

(vi. 22.) Grievous blemishes may often be detected in the character of the righteous; and the announcement of our text is not that they are blessed when the world reproaches them with these, but that they are blessed when, hating them for the sake of Christ, it reproaches them with what cannot be *truthfully* laid to their charge.

VER. 12.—*Rejoice and be exceeding glad.*—The high form of rejoicing expressed here by ἀγαλλιᾶσθε is expressed in Luke's report by σιγησατε, leap for joy. This exhortation is enforced by the assurance, "Great is your reward in heaven;" and this assurance is confirmed by a reference to the similar case of the prophets of former ages—"For so persecuted they the prophets which were before you"—the prophets, whom they persecuted as they persecuted you, have received a great reward in heaven, and so shall ye. Or the reference to the case of the ancient prophets may be viewed as confirming the announcement, "Blessed are ye," the force of it being, "Ye are blessed when they revile you," &c., and notwithstanding you encounter this painful treatment, for so persecuted they the prophets, and *they* were and are blessed. This is probably the correct view of the connection; and, if we take this view, the passage forms an inverted parallelism, thus—

A. | Blessed are ye when men shall revile you and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you, falsely, for my sake.

B. | Rejoice and be exceeding glad;

B. | For great is your reward in heaven;

A. | For so persecuted they the prophets which were before you.

The righteous, under whatever circumstances they practise righteousness, are blessed; but they are eminently blessed when they are called to suffer much for Christ, and are faithful and steadfast. In that case "their reward in heaven" is "great," and they have cause therefore to "rejoice and be exceeding glad." Persecution, indeed, and es-

pecially severe persecution, is in itself depressing and discouraging; and, therefore, to sustain the righteous when exercised with it, Christ assures them in A. that they are blessed even when persecuted, and the more abundantly blessed because they are faithful under persecution. This assurance he confirms in A., by referring to the corresponding case of the ancient prophets, who, like them, were persecuted, faithful, and abundantly blessed. Upon the assurance in A. he founds the exhortation in B., and then enforces that exhortation in B.

Either view of the connection, however, gives the same meaning, for “Great is your reward in heaven” is but another form of the assurance, “Blessed are ye.”

It is to those two verses (11,12), as was formerly observed, that the beatitudes in Luke’s report (vi. 20–23) are parallel. The place which they thus occupied in the discourse may account for the abbreviated form in which the description of the character of the righteous appears in them—“poor,” instead of “poor in spirit;” “that hunger,” instead of “that hunger and thirst after righteousness.” The description of it having been given before in full, in the general announcement with which the sermon opened (Matt. v. 3–10), the leading term in the description of any particular feature would now sufficiently indicate such feature.

VER. 13.—*Ye are the salt of the earth.*—The quality or use of salt, in reference to which the righteous are said to be “the salt of the earth,” is determined at once by the question which immediately follows, as claiming the serious attention of those with respect to whom this statement is made, of all who aspire to the privileges of the righteous—“If the salt have lost its savour, wherewith shall it be salted.” Here salt is viewed as the great seasoning antiseptic agent; for this is the view of it from which it follows that, “if it lose its savour” or “saltiness” (Mark ix. 50), it cannot itself be “salted” or “seasoned.”—(Mark ix. 50; Luke xiv. 34.) No

other agent can perform for it the office which itself alone was appointed to perform.

We cannot regard *earth* as denoting the *human family*. We take it in its usual sense. It has a reference, indeed, to the human family, but only as denoting its habitation. When man corrupts his way upon the earth, the earth itself, in consequence of this corruption, becomes corrupt before God.—(Gen. vi. 5, 11–13; Numb. xxxv. 33, 34.) And if no check were applied, and no counteracting and elevating influence exerted, the corruption of both would speedily gain such a height, that a universal and overwhelming judgment would be inevitable—a judgment falling in the first place upon the earth as corrupt, and thus and otherwise reaching man the corrupter of it.—(Gen. vi. 6, 13; 2 Pet. iii. 6, 10.) Now the righteous are the antiseptic agent by which the earth is preserved from the corruption, into which, otherwise, it would thus rapidly sink—"the salt" wherewith it is "salted." The righteous both counteract by their influence and their efforts the tendency of the ungodly to become more and more corrupt, and exert on the earth a direct "seasoning" power—the Lord spares it for their sake.

To render this illustration or analogical argument legitimate, it is not at all necessary that salt should be capable of losing its seasoning and antiseptic quality; it is quite enough that the case of salt that has lost it may be supposed. The force of our Lord's question, is not that *cases occur* of salt losing its savour, and that there is nothing wherewith in those cases it *can* be salted; but that, *supposing* salt to have lost its savour, there is nothing wherewith in that case it *could* be salted.

We have a similar question in Psalm xi. 3,—“If the foundations be destroyed, what can the righteous do?” The foundations intended are those set forth in the following verses, namely, the fact and the principles of the divine government—the stable foundations of the hopes and of the

security of the righteous. The question does not imply that those foundations *may* be destroyed, and the fact is that they *may not* be destroyed; but, in the experience of the psalmist, matters looked for the time as if they might be destroyed, and as if things were actually rushing towards that result. Upon what was thus the aspect of the existing conjuncture, and the issue which it threatened, he founded his confidence that the necessary check and corrective would be applied. What, if left unrestrained and in full operation, would involve the destruction of the foundations, and deprive the righteous of all ground of hope, and all prospect of safety, would certainly be rectified. The case of the destruction of the foundations is put, that, from the necessary and evident consequence of it, the inference might be irresistibly drawn that the realization of it could not take place.

Perhaps, indeed, the fact—for it seems to be the fact—that salt does not lose its savour, renders the illustration all the more appropriate; for it is also a fact that the righteous never lose the analogous peculiarity of character and influence by which they are distinguished. And the constitution of Christ's kingdom, securing that it shall not be lost, makes no provision for restoring it—it makes no provision for meeting a case which it does permit to occur. Thus the loss of it is an evil for which there is no remedy; and it is an evil in which it is the tendency of a certain procedure to issue, or rather which a certain procedure involves. He whose procedure is upon the whole or predominantly corrupting to the character of others, is not distinguished by the peculiarity in question, and is not one of the righteous. Whoever would be classed with the righteous, and would participate in their blessedness, must wholly decline and renounce such a procedure. This is the view which our Lord's question enforces.

"Salt" is clearly the subject to "shall be salted," which the connection supplies; and no reason of any force can be

urged for displacing it in favour of some such subject as *food*. The only legitimate course, therefore, is to adhere to the obvious and natural construction. It is not enough that the words might admit of a different construction; a different construction cannot be adopted, unless, on grounds that can be indicated, such a departure from the natural construction is called for. Though it be not necessary to confirm the claims of the natural construction, when opposed only by a construction in favour of which, at the best, nothing can be urged but that it is admissible, it may be observed that "salt" is clearly the subject of the following statement,— "Is thenceforth good for nothing," &c.; and, surely, if it had been dropped in the previous statement, it could not be thus resumed without the least intimation of such a difference of subject. In a parallel passage in Mark (ix. 50), as here, according to the construction for which we contend, it is the seasoning of the salt that is represented as hypothetically impossible.

*It is thenceforth good for nothing.*—Unfit for its proper office, and incapable of any useful application, it will no longer be carefully preserved, but will be "cast out" and treated as worthless. The subjects of the Messiah's kingdom, if they proved to be as salt which has lost its savour, should be visited with an analogous treatment, they should be cast out of the kingdom, and shame and everlasting contempt should be allotted to them.—(Dan. xii. 2.)

VER. 14.—*Ye are the light of the world.*—See Part II., sect. ii., par. 10.—"The world" is the system of things here below, man being viewed as a part of it, and as occupying the position which he holds among the other parts of it, and in relation to them. Of course, however, each part or element of the complex whole is not presented with its strictly proportionate degree of prominence in every instance of the use of the word. In one instance, one element is more prominent, and claims chief attention, and in another, another.—

(1 John ii. 15, 2; John i. 10.) It would not be correct with respect to a given instance, however, to say, that the prominent element alone is presented, as, for example, that, in the instance under consideration, mankind simply is meant. This easy but unsatisfactory mode of interpretation—a principal source of the undue multiplication of meanings—proceeds upon the view, that, when one word is synonymous with another as to the leading idea conveyed, it is synonymous with it throughout, and might be displaced in favour of it, without any change or modification of the sense; whereas it is unquestionably for the purpose of presenting a particular modification of the idea conveyed in common by words thus synonymous, that one of them, the one that presents that modification, is selected and used in a given case. Thus, while it is true that in our passage “the world” denotes the human family, it denotes it, not simply considered, but as comprehended in this mundane system; or, rather, it denotes this system itself, the human family being the portion of it in reference to which the whole is viewed.

By sin the world has been sunk into a state of darkness (Eph. vi. 12; John xii. 46; Col. i. 13), but light has been provided for it. Christ is its light (John viii. 12, ix. 5, xii. 46; Luke ii. 32), the glorious “sun” (Mal. iv. 2) which sheds abroad “the true light” amidst the prevailing darkness.—(John i. 5; 1 John ii. 8.) Christ, as God, is the source of all true knowledge, the author both of the capacity and the communication of it; and as Mediator he has recovered for sinners the forfeited benefit of spiritual knowledge, and is appointed to dispense, and engaged in dispensing it. He is thus, and especially on this latter ground, “the light of the world” in the highest sense. In dealing with the world as its “light,” he employs the influence and the agency, the example and the efforts, of his people. Thus, deriving light from him, and as his ministers shedding it upon the world, they become so many stars or “luminaries” (Phil. ii. 15), by

which its darkness is relieved. In this subordinate sense they also are "the light of the world." The view particularly presented is, that they have been appointed to this office, and are under obligation to discharge it.

*A city that is set on a hill cannot be hid.*—See Part II., sect. ii., par. 11.—It is very probable that, from the mountain on which our Lord delivered this sermon, a city set on a hill was distinctly in view. Be this, however, as it may, the illustration itself is obvious and appropriate. It represents the subjects of Christ's kingdom as occupying a position so conspicuous and exposed, that they cannot escape observation; and, as is indicated by another illustration which immediately follows, it is the doing of the Lord—a result of special Divine arrangement, that they occupy this position.

VER. 15.—*Neither do men light a candle.*—When men light "a lamp," it forms an essential part of their design, and of the execution of it, to "put it on a lamp-stand." To bring out the more distinctly the necessity of this disposal of it, reference is made to the different, and, as to its effect, the opposite procedure, of "putting it under a bushel," as a mode of disposing of it incompatible with their object in lighting it, and which they do not therefore adopt.

So far, the view presented by the two illustrations is, that the righteous, in point of fact, like a city set on a hill, and in virtue of the established arrangement of the kingdom with respect to them, like a lamp lit and put, not under a bushel, but on a lamp-stand, are exposed to observation. The latter illustration, however, is carried further. The lamp, being lit and put on the lamp-stand, is represented as giving light to all that are in the house, and thus fully serving the purpose of a lamp.

VER. 16.—*Let your light so shine before men.*—On the office of the righteous, as "the salt of the earth," our Lord founds, not an exhortation, but a warning; for they should aim at a higher achievement than the discharge of mere counteractive

functions.—“If the salt have lost its savour, wherewith shall it be salted? it is thenceforth good for nothing, but to be cast out, and trodden under foot of men.” But on their office as “the light of the world,” which bears upon the highest positive results, he founds the corresponding exhortation of this verse.

The righteous, as the preceding illustrations indicate, are “before men”—exposed to observation. Their office, as “the light of the world,” places them “before men;” and, from its very nature and design, its peculiar functions must be discharged “before men.” Their position, as sustaining this office, is analogous to that of a lamp, when men light it and put it on a lamp-stand; and as the lamp, when so treated and disposed of, fulfils the requirement of its position by giving light to all that are in the house, they are here exhorted to fulfil, in like manner, the requirement of *their* position,—“so let *your* light shine before men.”

In discharging their functions as “the light of the world,” they are directed to seek “that men may see their good works, and glorify their Father in heaven;” the latter as their chief and ultimate end, and the former as a means to it, and thus a subordinate end.

It is the performance by the righteous of the “good works” of their position—comprehending, of course, the proper efforts to diffuse the truth, and all of them, from their nature as “good works,” affording a practical exhibition, illustration, and enforcement of it—that constitutes the shining of their light. Hence, in the shining of their light before men, and in proportion as it shines, men see their good works. And their good works, thus seen, is a powerful means of leading men to glorify God, by duly recognising his character and acknowledging his claims.—(Phil. ii. 15, 16; 1 Pet. ii. 11, 12, 15, iii. 1, 2; Acts ii. 43, 47, iv. 13; 2 Cor. iii. 2, 3; Titus ii. 10.)

The subjects of Christ’s kingdom are the children of God,

and filial love should impel them to seek that all may glorify their "Father in heaven." They should recognise it as due to God that all glorify him; for, while he is unspeakably glorious in himself, he is highly exalted relatively,—he is "in the heavens."—(Eccles. v. 2; Ps. xi. 5, ciii. 19, cxv. 3, cxxiii. 1; Lam. iii. 41; Heb. v. 1.)

VER. 17.—*Think not.*—See Intro., sect. i., par. 1–7; and Part I., sect. ii., par. 2.—In these words our Lord seems to refer not only to the carnal views entertained respecting his kingdom, the realization of which would involve the destroying of the law, but also to a more definite expectation that he would destroy it.

*To destroy the law or the prophets.*—It was with the *thought* that he was come to destroy the law that Christ had now to deal;\* and, in dealing with it, he not only disclaimed the particular intention ascribed to him, but every intention of the kind. His hearers thought, or were disposed to think, that he was come to destroy the law; and he gave them to understand that he was not come to destroy the law, or the prophets either,—that he was not come to destroy at all, but to fulfil.

Such being the force of the disclaimer, the use of the disjunctive "or" involves no difficulty. To repel the *thought*, not that he was come to destroy the law *and* the prophets, but that he was come to destroy the law, a strictly appropriate and the most effective disclaimer was, that he was not come to do this *or* any thing of the kind.

It is evidently the law itself, and not the books of Moses, in which it is contained—the law as a law, or a code of enactments, that is intended in our passage. And "to de-

\* This view is supported by the scope and bearing of the entire sermon, and it seems to be required by the fact that it is only of the law that Christ asserts the stability and permanence in the next verse, and that it is to teaching destructive of the law that he immediately and throughout opposes himself in the sequel.

stroy the law” is to destroy its authority. Its authority is its life, that which constitutes or imparts to it its proper and distinctive being. While it retains its authority it is still the law, but if its authority be destroyed it exists as law no longer.

When to his disclaimer our Lord adds “or the prophets,” the force of the addition is, “or ought else comprehended in the existing economy.”—(Matt. vii. 12; Luke xvi. 16.)

If the law should be destroyed, or should suffer, the prophets would be destroyed or would suffer with it, for both are upheld by the same great principles.—(Matt. vii. 12; xxii. 37–40.) It was the very office of the prophets to teach and maintain the continued and continuing authority of the law, and to enforce its requirements with promises, denunciations, and predictions; and hence if the law were destroyed, they also, no longer characterised by their former agreement with fact and reality, would be simultaneously destroyed.

The extension of the disclaimer to the prophets directed attention to this fact, and thus not only served the purpose already indicated, but at the same time placed in a stronger light the utter unreasonableness of the thought that Christ was come to destroy the law. If the law were destroyed, all would be destroyed.

*I am not come to destroy but to fulfil.*—Here our Lord disclaims an intention “to destroy,” and announces an intention “to fulfil,” without the limitation in either case of a particular object, such as “the law or the prophets” understood. Destruction, whether of the law or of the prophets, or of ought else, was not the object of his coming, but fulfilment. He will, indeed, destroy the works of the devil (1 John iii. 8); that destruction, however, is not in its ultimate bearing a destruction, but a fulfilment. The works of the devil, so far as they obtain, are attended with the very opposite result to the great fulfilment to be achieved, and

the destruction of them, therefore, is properly a part, and an essential part, of the achievement of it.

Fulfilment, in the highest sense, consists in the maintenance of the principles and the accomplishment of the design of the divine government ; or, in other words, in the upholding and triumph of righteousness to the blessedness of the righteous and the glory of God ; and Christ came, not to work destruction, but to achieve this fulfilment. He came to raise righteousness, and blessedness as founded upon it, and the manifestation of the divine glory as resulting from both, to their appointed and ultimate fulness. He came to perfect and establish all that is good and beautiful and desirable. In this fulfilment, the law and the prophets shall be fulfilled.

As regards the law, he came to fulfil it by realising all its types and prefigurations, whether presented in its ceremonial or in its civil provisions and requirements \* (Col. ii. 17 ; Heb. viii. 5, ix. 23, x. 1, xii. 22), by rendering for his people the obedience which it requires as the condition of life (Rom. v. 19), and bearing on their behalf the punishment which it attaches to disobedience (1 Cor. xv. 3 ; 1 Pet. ii. 24), and by producing in them the righteousness of personal character.—(Rom. viii. 3, 4.)

VER. 18.—*For verily I say unto you, Until heaven and earth pass.*—The thought to be repelled comprehended two elements,—that the law would be destroyed, and that Christ was come to destroy it. Having already repelled it as regards the latter element, he now repels it as regards the former. The connection is, “Think not that I am come to destroy the law ; such a thought would be wholly delusive ; for I am not come with any such intention, and not only so, but, I solemnly apprise you, the law will not be destroyed.”

\* The theocracy shadowed forth Christ's spiritual kingdom, with all its blessings and privileges, as a kingdom of grace and a kingdom of glory.

In this emphatic assertion of the permanence and enduring authority of the law, he first marks a certain limit, the passing of heaven and earth, and then declares that, until this limit is reached, "one jot or one tittle shall in nowise pass from the law till all be fulfilled;" that, in the mean time, and until the specified limit is reached, whatever may pass from it by fulfilment, so far as that which is fulfilled may be said to pass from it, neither more nor less shall pass from it otherwise.

No impending change connected with his appearing involved the passing from the law of aught unfulfilled; no change short of the passing of heaven and earth could involve such a result. It is with the present order of things that our Lord is here concerned; and his position is, that, to the very close of the present order of things, "till heaven and earth pass," nought shall pass from the law unfulfilled.

The passing of heaven and earth indicates generally the termination of the present order and constitution of things. The mode of termination we learn elsewhere; it does not come into consideration here. The heavens and the earth which are now shall be changed, and new heavens and a new earth shall arise.—(Heb. i. 12; 2 Pet. iii. 7, 10–13.)

"Jot," or yodh, is the smallest letter of the Hebrew alphabet, and it is a very small letter, and *ἄσπερα* denotes the apex, or point of a letter, particularly of yodh. Thus, "one jot or one tittle," is a forcible expression for the very least portion.

*Shall pass from the law.*—So as to have no place in it; shall cease to be a portion of it, as no longer bearing the character, or possessing the authority, of law.

*Till all be fulfilled.*—Till all be, or come to pass; till all that the law requires be realised. The universality denoted may, perhaps, be regarded as coextensive, not with the entire law, but with any particular portion of it with respect to which it may be held that it will pass, or has passed, from

the law; and then the force of "all" will be "all so far as regards such particular portion." Till, however, all be realised as regards the whole law, all will not be fully realised as regards any one portion of it. Though, for example, in the case of ceremonial institutions and rites, all has been realised in the sphere of the outward and temporary, all will not be realised in the sphere of the inward and spiritual, till all be realised as regards the law in its whole extent. Accordingly, though ceremonial institutions and rites have passed from the law, so far as realization or fulfilment has thus proceeded in their case, they have passed from it no farther; in their spiritual import, they still have a place in it, and will have a place in it, "till heaven and earth pass." The restricted acceptance of "all" becomes thus commensurate with the extended acceptance of it.

VER. 19.—*Whosoever therefore shall break.*—The constitution of the kingdom of heaven, as bearing upon the law, being such as is stated in the preceding verse, it follows that "whosoever," &c. This is the connection indicated by "therefore." Such, as regards this matter, is the constitution of the kingdom of heaven, "Therefore," &c.

The point at issue is the continued authority of the law, and our Lord maintains its continued authority, and here describes and condemns the opposite procedure of *dissolving* its authority—the procedure, not of those who *break* its commandments in practice, but of those who, so far as regards intention and tendency, cause them, at least virtually, to "pass from the law," depriving them of its *stringency* and *binding* power. This is the procedure which the verb employed, λύση, properly describes, it is the procedure attributed to our Lord himself, and which he disclaims (ver. 17), the procedure to which his statement of the stability of the law is opposed (ver. 18), and against which his vindication and exposition of its requirements are directed (ver. 21–48).

Thus, as regards the commandment, "Thou shalt not kill," it is against the dissolution of its authority with respect to all it forbids except actual murder that he contends.—(Ver. 21–26).

*These least commandments.*—The least commandments, or the commandments so viewed, to which he referred in the preceding verse, in denying that one jot or one tittle shall pass from the law unfulfilled.

Any, who relax the stringency and contract the breadth of the law (Ps. cxix. 96; Heb. iv. 12), first of all view and represent as *little* the commandments which they subject to this treatment. They could not well subject to it commandments acknowledged to be *great*, and, when they once regard certain commandments as little, they can the more easily take the further and final step of treating them as, in existing circumstances, no commandments,—as having no *obliging* power. This process is applied with peculiar eagerness and facility to commandments respecting the affections and the inward part of duty. These, though of fundamental importance in the divine law, come naturally, under the influence of carnality and externalism, to be regarded, first as little, and then as no commandments.

In the phraseology under consideration, our Lord probably glances at the process now briefly traced.

The distinction of greater and less ought never to be made in dealing with divinely revealed truth and divinely commanded duty, for the purpose of weakening the claims or impairing the authority of what is referred to the latter of those classes, though probably it is for this purpose it is generally made.

*And teach men so.*—The first step is to place certain commandments in the category of portions of the law that have no binding power, and the next, to "teach men" according to this classification. It is the expectation that as a teacher he was come to destroy the law, that Christ opposes in this

context, and he therefore appropriately condemns all such teaching.

*Shall be called the least.*—The carnally minded may applaud, as great above all others, the teacher who displays the greatest dexterity in dissolving the authority of the law, and achieves most in that direction ; but “in the kingdom of heaven,”—tried at its bar and judged on its principles,—he shall not be thus applauded, he “shall be called least.” The question is, not what place he will occupy among the citizens of the kingdom of heaven, or whether he will be one of them, but what place he will occupy among teachers. *Without* the kingdom of heaven, under the influence of a carnal antinomian spirit, the first place among them may be assigned to him ; but, *in* that kingdom, and under the guidance of its distinctive spirit and principles, he shall be called least among them. We take “in the kingdom of heaven” as a specification attached to “shall be called,” and not to “least.”—(Luke xvi. 15.)

*Whosoever shall do.*—That in the kingdom of heaven a teacher may “be called great,” he must so recognise the authority of the commandments as to “do” them. Any recognition of their authority that does not result in corresponding practice, is worthless.

*Teach them.*—Neither these nor the corresponding words in the preceding context are to be restricted to official teaching. Those who disown the authority of the law, increase their offence by “teaching men so,” and those who recognise its authority, and act accordingly, should add corresponding teaching to this belief and practice. “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father in heaven,” is an authoritative instruction to all believers.

*The same.*—“The same” is emphatic, and marks the antithesis—*he*, though not the other, *he* alone *shall be called great*. The object is to indicate that he will be acknowledged as possessing true excellence.

VER. 20. *For I say unto you.*—He here confirms the statement of the preceding verse, as in verse 18 he confirms the statement of verse 17. The statement to be specially confirmed is, that all whose teaching goes to deprive the law of its authority and obliging power shall in the kingdom of heaven “be called least” among teachers; and he confirms it by solemnly declaring that, without a righteousness surpassing the righteousness of such teachers, there will be no admission into the kingdom of heaven. When the righteousness taught is rejected, those who teach it must, as teachers, be held in very low estimation.

*The scribes and pharisees* were such teachers as are described; and their “righteousness” is the righteousness they taught and exemplified.

There is also here an implied confirmation of the other statement of the preceding verse, “Whosoever shall do and teach them, the same shall be called great in the kingdom of heaven.”

## PART III.—(C.) V. 21.—VI.

SECTION I.—RIGHTEOUSNESS DISCRIMINATED AS REGARDS  
ABSTINENCE FROM WHAT IS FORBIDDEN.—(C.c.) v. 21-48.

1. IN the preceding context, our Lord, as we have seen, sets forth the necessity of righteousness, and in doing so he repels the antinomian error, that he should destroy the law and strip it of its office and authority; in which case, of course, righteousness, that is, conformity to the law, would not be necessary, for it could not exist. But in the circumstances with which he had immediately to deal,—and the circumstances with which the advocates of righteousness have to deal in every age are substantially the same,—it was not enough to defend the authority of the law, it was necessary also to vindicate its true import—the extent and spirituality of its requirements. This, accordingly, our Lord does in the passage now under consideration, and in the following chapter.

2. The “scribes and pharisees” contracted the law within the limits of the letter, and, in their interpretation of it, disregarded and contradicted the spirit of its requirements. Christ, therefore, declares that conformity to it, under the character which it assumed in their hands, is not the righteousness which must distinguish the subjects of his kingdom: “I say unto you that, except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven.” And he accordingly

proceeds to rescue it from that character and to unfold its true import.

3. That conduct, outwardly conformed to the law, may be truthful,—and if not truthful it is utterly worthless,—it must spring from a corresponding state of heart. We are not to judge of the performances of a rational and moral agent as if he were a mere machine. A machine is capable only of accomplishing external results; and, if it accomplish well the appropriate results of this kind, it does all we expect from it,—it fulfils its office. But man is capable of forming purposes and entertaining desires; and it is only when he forms the purposes and entertains the desires proper in the circumstances, and embodies them in the proper outward activity, that he does what is to be expected from *him*, and fulfils *his* office. While, however, there is this difference, we proceed upon the same principle in judging of both classes of performances. We hold, for example, that the performances of a watch are not such as they ought to be, if only the minute-hand moves, the hour-hand being stationary, for in that case they are the performances of only a part and not of the whole of it; and, on the same ground, we hold that the performances of man are not such as they ought to be, if they are mere outward acts, and do not spring from and express a right state of the heart, for in that case they are the performances of only a part—of the inferior part—and not of the whole of his nature. Thus the conformity to the law which is required is the conformity to it of the entire man,—his conformity to it not only in that which is without—the activity of the life, but also in that which is within—the dispositions, desires, and purposes.

4. In obeying the law we have to do with the Omniscient, who searches and knows the heart; and, accordingly, our obedience must be more than an outward and partial obedience; it must be a *heartly* obedience—the service of our entire nature, not merely of the inferior part of it, which is

immediately exercised in outward acts, but also and primarily of the nobler part of it—of our souls. This is the only service that it would be worthy of the Omniscient to enjoin or to accept.

5. While true conformity to the law is thus coextensive with our nature, and comprehends, as the fundamental portion of it, an internal element, the “righteousness of the scribes and pharisees,” the conformity to the law which they recognised and exemplified, was a mere external thing.

6. From the nature of the case, it is impossible that the law should specify in detail, and should describe minutely, the conduct proper to every occasion; and, although such particularity were practicable, it would greatly detract from the excellency of the law, for it would supersede the conscientious watchfulness and consideration in ascertaining our duty, which impart to human conduct much of its value, and are essential to the development of human character. The law thus consists necessarily, at least to a great extent, of somewhat general injunctions; and it was of this feature of its character that the scribes and pharisees took advantage, in reducing conformity to it to a mere external obedience.

7. Our attention is first directed to their application of this pernicious process in the case of prohibitions, in which the express terms specify only external acts. Our Lord illustrates and exposes their treatment of three precepts of this kind—“Thou shalt not kill; thou shalt not commit adultery; thou shalt not forswear thyself.” Though, expressly, such prohibitions enjoin only abstinence from the outward acts specified, yet, by implication, and taken according to their intention and spirit, they prohibit the state of the heart from which those acts emanate. As regards, for example, the first of the prohibitions which we have quoted from our passage, murder does not properly consist in the taking away of the life of a fellow-man, but in the taking away of it under the influence of a certain state of the heart. Accordingly, when murder

is prohibited—prohibited by the Omniscient—it is not the outward act only that is prohibited, but the offence in its whole extent—every thing internal, as well as external, that is comprehended in it. The scribes and pharisees, however, restricted the prohibition to the outward act; it was thus restricted by their tradition; they taught that it was in this restricted sense that “it had been said to them of old time, Thou shalt not kill.” It was only the external act that they really regarded as involving criminality and exposing to punishment. In opposition to this limitation of the prohibition, by means of an unsympathising adherence to its letter, in contravention of its spirit, our Lord declares that contemptuous treatment of a brother, and even causeless anger, involve criminality and expose to punishment.—“But I say unto you, That whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause shall be in danger of the judgment: and whosoever shall say to his brother, Raca, shall be in danger of the council: but whosoever shall say, Thou fool, shall be in danger of hell-fire.” The inward part of murder consists in being angry with our fellow-man, or moved by resentful feelings towards him, and in despising him, or holding him to be of no account. When we are thus affected towards him, or proceed thus towards him in our hearts, we violate the prohibition, “Thou shalt not kill;” and of course, therefore, we violate it also by any corresponding words or acts, as by saying to him, “Raca,” or “Thou fool.”

8. The terms in which our Lord indicates the condemnation and punishment attached to the offences which he specifies, were derived from distinctions which obtained among the Jews; and the meaning is, that these offences, even the least of them, exposed to the judicial visitations of the divine government; that they involved in the guilt of violating the prohibition under consideration, and should be visited with the punishment allotted to such violation. Hence, he who had offended in any of the ways indicated should not be accepted

in the worship or the religious services that he presented to God, until he first took proper steps to be reconciled to his brother; and, if he did not seek reconciliation with him, but bore to the last the character, and occupied the position, of an offender against him, he should not escape the righteous judgment of God.—“Therefore if thou bring thy gift to the altar, and there rememberest that thy brother hath ought against thee, leave there thy gift before the altar, and go thy way; first be reconciled to thy brother, and then come and offer thy gift. Agree with thine adversary quickly, whilst thou art in the way with him; lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, and the judge deliver thee to the officer, and thou be cast into prison. Verily I say unto thee, Thou shalt by no means come out thence till thou hast paid the uttermost farthing.”—(Ver. 23-26.)

9. Their traditional gloss restricted in a similar manner the prohibition respecting adultery, which, according to their interpretation of it, did not extend to the corresponding lust, or to any outward manifestation of that lust, short of the offence named. Our Lord rescues it from this restriction.—“But I say unto you, That whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, hath committed adultery with her already in his heart.” And, while they regarded as no offence any violation of the prohibition, except the violation expressly named, he represents even the least violation of it, in its extended and legitimate sense, as so great an offence, that rather than commit it, we should willingly subject ourselves to the most painful discipline and self-denial.—“And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell.”—(Ver. 29, 30.)

10. Having thus restored the prohibition to its legitimate extent, he exposes an evasion of it which was sanctioned by tradition. The doctrine was, that if a man put away his wife, giving her a writing of divorcement, he might, without any breach of the law against adultery, marry another, thus accomplishing the purpose of the adulterer without incurring the guilt of adultery. Our Lord teaches, in direct opposition to this doctrine, that he who put away his wife, save for the single offence which disannuls the marriage covenant, will not only be guilty of adultery himself if he marry another, but will also, if his wife whom he puts away marry, be the indirect cause of adultery on her part, and on the part of him who marries her.—(Ver. 31, 32.)

11. Their gross perversion of the prohibition respecting perjury afforded our Lord another illustration. This prohibition, "Thou shalt not forswear thyself," they seem to have restricted to vows made to God, for they explained it by the positive injunction, "Thou shalt perform unto the Lord thine oaths." The radical offence of him who forswears himself is, that he acts with irreverence towards God, in appealing to his omniscience and his righteous judgment, and yet swearing falsely. Accordingly, when it is forbidden that we forswear ourselves, it is forbidden that we act with the irreverence towards God of which he who forswears himself is thus guilty. But we act with such irreverence towards him if we swear at all of our own choice, or if the cause of our swearing be that we are not restrained by a due fear of him, and not that we are constrained and laid under obligation by circumstances. Nor do we escape the guilt of such irreverence, though, instead of swearing directly by God himself, we swear, in terms, by somewhat else; for, if our oaths are not idolatrous, they derive their significancy and force from a reference to God. "But I say unto you, Swear not at all: neither by heaven; for it is God's throne: nor by the earth; for it is his footstool:

neither by Jerusalem; for it is the city of the great King: neither shalt thou swear by thy head; because thou canst not make one hair white or black. But let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay: for whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.”—(Ver. 34–37.)

12. The precept from which our Lord draws his next illustration is in its form a positive precept, but its bearing upon life is that of a prohibition. The direction, “An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth,” was addressed to magistrates, and intended to regulate the administration of criminal justice.—(Exod. xxi. 22, 24; Lev. xxiv. 20, 22; Deut. xix. 18, 21.) It accordingly implied a prohibition of the offences to be punished in the manner directed. When the magistrates were directed to punish those offences, the people were, by implication, forbidden to commit them. But the scribes and pharisees, with a perverse dexterity in making the letter of the law subservient to their purpose, though in utter contravention of its spirit, construed the direction to punish the offences referred to into a licence to commit them in retaliation. It is the private retaliation, which the rule, “An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth,” was thus made to authorise, that our Lord so emphatically forbids.—“But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil; but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also. And if any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also. And whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain. Give to him that asketh thee; and from him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.”—(Ver. 39–42.)

13. There is here no determination or deliverance on the subject of self-defence, or on any kindred subject. The only point at issue is the lawfulness of retaliation, and Christ pronounces it unlawful, and forbids it. He requires that we keep at the utmost distance from all resistance of evil in a retaliating spirit, and that no injuries done to us prevent us

from bestowing benefits. The intention of the punishment, prescribed in the rule under consideration, was to expel from human intercourse all unkind and unbrotherly conduct; and our Lord commands his subjects to concur in this intention, and by their whole deportment and spirit to contribute to this result.

14. Prohibitory precepts, bearing upon our conduct towards our fellow-men, imply the requirement, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour." They bid us decline every lower position, and rise to the exercise of love. Our Lord, accordingly, follows up his illustration of the spirit and extent of this class of precepts with a vindication of the true import of the injunction, which is thus the fulfilling of them.—(Rom. xiii. 10.) From this injunction the scribes and pharisees derived a licence to "hate their enemies."—(Ver. 43.) They restricted the term "neighbour" to their countrymen—to those connected with them by vicinity—instead of regarding it as descriptive of the relation to them which all their fellow-men sustained; and understanding, consequently, the injunction, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour," as an injunction to love their countrymen, they inferred from it that they were authorised, if not positively required, to confine their love to their countrymen, and to hate all others. But, though the term neighbour were taken in their own restricted sense, this inference would not be well founded; for surely the step which we take in loving our neighbour in that sense, is a step in the direction of loving all our fellow-men. And, besides, if we love those who are our neighbours by vicinity with the love which we owe them, and not on mere external grounds, we shall love those also who are not our neighbours by vicinity, for all the great considerations that awaken legitimate love in the former case are presented equally in the latter.

15. The duty of loving all our fellow-men, our enemies, even the bitterest of them not excepted, our Lord enforces

by the consideration that the discharge of it is an essential characteristic of his subjects, as being the children and bearing the image of God, and as being thus distinguished by moral excellence of which others are destitute.—“But I say unto you, Love your enemies, bless them that curse you, do good to them that hate you, and pray for them which despitefully use you and persecute you; that ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven: for he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust. For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye? do not even the publicans the same? And if ye salute your brethren only, what do ye more than others? do not even the publicans so?”—(Ver. 44–47.)

16. The restriction of prohibitory precepts, which formed a prominent part of the traditional system of the scribes and pharisees, has obtained, though generally under a more disguised form, in every age, and obtains among ourselves. To this fact is to be traced the satisfaction of many with their own character, and their disposition to justify themselves; for it may be observed that it is, in a great measure, for negative excellencies, for their supposed obedience to prohibitory precepts, that they take credit to themselves—they have not done this, and they have not done the other thing. According to our Lord's method of expounding prohibitory precepts,—that is, according to the true import of such precepts,—those violate them who do anything of the same general character with the offences expressly prohibited, or who cherish any corresponding inclinations or desires, or who do not rise to the opposite disposition. If this method of expounding them were universally adopted, would not many think of themselves much less favourably than they now do? Would not many, for example, who now testify in their own favour that they have not done harm to any one, feel themselves obliged to relinquish this self-flattery?

If it were, indeed, true that they had not done harm to any one, it would be true not only that they had not done anything that had an injurious bearing upon their neighbour, but also that they had never cherished such a spirit towards him, or that the state of their hearts towards him had never been such as would lead them to do anything that had an injurious bearing upon him; and, still further, that they had loved him. And is this true? Have they loved their neighbour?

17. Reader, when you recognise the spirit and the extent of the prohibitions of the law, as they are presented by our Lord in the portion of the sermon on the mount which we have been examining in this section, do you not feel that you fall grievously short of full obedience to them? Every true believer, however, honestly and earnestly endeavours to render full obedience to them, and to effect and maintain a total withdrawal, in heart and in life, from every portion of the territory which they interdict.

18. In dealing with a law that throughout takes cognizance of the dispositions and affections, how necessary to guard against externalism, against resting in an outward abstinence from forbidden acts, and in outward propriety and blamelessness of deportment! In all this there is no superiority to the righteousness of the scribes and pharisees. All the subjects of the kingdom of heaven obey from the heart.

SECTION II.—RIGHTEOUSNESS DISCRIMINATED AS REGARDS THE  
PERFORMANCE OF POSITIVE DUTY—REFERENCE TO GOD.

—(C. d. e.) vi. 1-18.

1. The proper source of abstinence from forbidden acts is freedom from the affections and desires which prompt to them. There should be no necessity for the operation of motives to secure abstinence from them. Thus, the proper source of abstinence from the acts forbidden in the precept, "Thou shalt not kill," is freedom from anger and hatred, and

not the fear of punishment, or any other restraining motive. But there can be no freedom from evil affections and desires, if love, the fundamental and distinctive element of the opposite class of affections and desires, do not occupy the heart. Accordingly, our Lord, having taught that abstinence from forbidden outward acts must spring from and be associated with a corresponding state of the heart, proceeds to enforce the exercise of love, resting the exercise of it on the proper grounds, and restoring to it the universality of which the scribes and pharisees had stripped it. He passes from negative purity of heart to positive sympathy with all that has any claim upon us, whether to complacency or to benevolence. This exercise of love, on the proper grounds and towards all its proper objects, is the perfection of human character ; and, accordingly, our Lord sums up the enforcement of it in the exhortation, "Be ye perfect as your Father which is in heaven is perfect." "God is love,"—regards with benevolence and complacency all that ought to be thus regarded. In this appears the perfection of his character, and the same excellence should adorn ours.

2. Love being cherished, there ought to follow, and in point of fact there will follow, the proper manifestation of it, which is not abstinence from forbidden, but the performance of commanded acts. Our Lord, accordingly, next directs attention to the proper performance of such acts, or of the positive part of duty.

3. While abstinence from forbidden acts should be determined by freedom from evil affections and desires, the performance of commanded acts should be determined by a due regard to the ultimate ends to be sought by us. Activity not directed to any end would be irrational, and, from the constitution of our nature, cannot take place ; hence, if our activity is not directed to the ultimate ends which we ought to seek, it will be directed to other ends, either such as we ought not to seek at all, or such as we ought not to seek as

ultimate ends. The regard to ends by which our activity is thus influenced is what we mean by *motives*, and a due regard to the ultimate ends which we ought to seek is essential to purity of motive.

4. The ultimate ends which we ought to seek are the glory of God, and blessedness for ourselves and others in the enjoyment of him. That we may seek the former of those ends, it is necessary that we seek the latter, for we greatly slight and dishonour God if we do not desire to enjoy him ourselves, and that others may enjoy him. And, on the other hand, if, for ourselves and others, we desire the enjoyment of him, it cannot be otherwise than that we shall seek his glory. A due regard to those ends is identical with the due recognition of God—the recognition of him as the glorious Jehovah, our Sovereign and our portion. To this due recognition of God there stand opposed, as antagonistic principles, an undue regard to man and an undue regard to such temporal things as affect, or as we suppose will affect us, directly or indirectly, with pleasure or pain, standing thus in the relation to us of sources of enjoyment.

5. The necessity of acting under the influence of a due recognition of God, and not of an undue regard to man, is the point which our Lord urges in the passage now under consideration. And in urging it he adduces three illustrative cases. The first is that of alms-deeds.—(Ver. 1-4.) The scribes and pharisees were careful to do their alms under circumstances of as much publicity as possible. They did them in the synagogues and in the streets, where many eyes would be upon them; and they used besides every means in their power to draw attention,—virtually, if not literally, “sounding a trumpet before them.” They thus acted the part of hypocrites, passing themselves for persons who had compassion on the poor, while, instead of being desirous that the poor should be relieved, they were desirous only that they themselves should “have glory of men.” Our Lord

warns the subjects of his kingdom against this reference or regard to man in their alms-deeds—"Take heed that ye do not your alms before men to be seen of them." Nay, he requires that, in a sense, they conceal their alms-deeds even from themselves, so that they shall not on account of them have glory of themselves any more than of others—"When thou doest thine alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth." In doing their alms, they should recognise the presence of God only, and have exclusive reference to him. Their fellow-men may be witnesses, but this should not result from any arrangement of theirs, and should in no way be of their seeking. They should act wholly under the influence of a due recognition of God. "*He* maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust," (ver. 45); and, if we recognise him as thus good and doing good, we shall feel it to be a part of the concurrence and co-operation with him, which are our duty, that we also do good as we have opportunity. He requires of us that we thus do good, and his goodness to ourselves has laid us under peculiar obligations to comply with the requirement.

6. Our Lord's next illustration is derived from prayer; and, first, from prayer made by men in their individual capacity. The scribes and pharisees, acting in this case the same hypocritical part as in the former, and desiring to be "seen of men," and to have glory of them, "loved to pray standing in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets." Against this spirit and this procedure our Lord warns the subjects of his kingdom. When they prayed, they were to seek retirement and secrecy, and not publicity, and to have respect to the eye of God and not to the eye of man—"When thou prayest, enter into thy closet, and when thou hast shut thy door, pray to thy Father which is in secret, and which seeth in secret." When we pray in our individual capacity, we have to do exclusively with God; and, therefore, instead

of courting the notice of our fellow-men, we should for the time seclude ourselves from them, that our minds may not be withheld or withdrawn from that solemn and earnest dealing with him in which prayer consists.

7. Passing from secret to social prayer—as it is evident he does from his using in verse 7 and in the following verses the plural pronoun “ye,” and not the singular pronoun “thou,” as he does in verses 5 and 6—he warns them against a corruption of the duty, which, like the transferring of our prayers as individuals from the closet to the synagogues or to the corners of the streets, seems to have been intended for purposes of ostentation—“When ye pray, use not vain repetitions.” The object of such repetitions might be to convey the impression of great earnestness, impelling them to iterate and reiterate their requests. Or they might be intended to give expansion and volume to their prayers, to impart to them the appearance of large performances. But whether or not the repetitions condemned indicated, when, as in the prayers of the scribes and pharisees, they obtained as a marked peculiarity, such reference to man, they certainly indicated the want of a due recognition of God; for, under the influence of a due recognition of God and in earnest dealing with him, it would be felt that no advantage could be gained by having recourse to this heathenish expedient of “much speaking.”

8. To preserve them from the use of “vain repetitions,” he further supplies them with a brief sketch or outline of prayer.—(Ver. 9-13.) This sketch is characterised by great comprehensiveness, without any approach to “vain repetitions,” and by just order and arrangement. It begins with invocation, in terms expressive of the glory, dominion, and power of God, and of the relation in which he stands to his people—“Our Father which art in heaven.” The body of the prayer consists of six petitions, which fall into two classes, the first three having direct reference to the glory of God, and the prosperity of his kingdom—“Hallowed be thy name;

Thy kingdom come; Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven;" and the succeeding three to the wants and welfare of the suppliants—"Give us this day our daily bread; Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors; Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil." The last two of these imply confession—confession of guilt, and of weakness and waywardness. In the concluding portion the petitions are urged and justified, and, at the same time, praise is ascribed, "For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever." Verses 14 and 15 may justly be regarded as a note on the petition, "Forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors"—"For if ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you: but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." If we are of such a spirit that we really forgive men their trespasses, we shall pray aright for forgiveness, and we shall receive it; but, if we do not forgive men their trespasses, our prayer for forgiveness cannot be of the right character, and will not be heard.

9. The remaining illustration our Lord derives from fasting. The hypocritical scribes and pharisees, when they fasted, assumed an aspect of distress and sadness, "disfiguring their faces that they might appear unto men to fast." He warns his disciples against this spirit and practice, and requires that, in their fasting, they study rather to escape the observation of men, and deal only with God—"But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face, that thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret."

10. The exclusive reference to God which he thus enjoins conducts to the most advantageous issue. Those who act from a regard to men, may have glory of men, but this will be their only reward; but those who act with the due reference to God, shall have true glory and blessedness. God

himself, as the judge of all, and as their father, “shall reward them openly,” and will thus give publicity to the alms-deeds, the prayers, and the fasting, which they keep secret.

**SECTION III.—RIGHTEOUSNESS DISCRIMINATED AS REGARDS  
THE PERFORMANCE OF POSITIVE DUTY—REFERENCE TO  
OUR HEAVENLY INTERESTS.**—(C. d. f.)—vi. 19-21.

1. We are influenced by motives, as moral, as social, and as sentient creatures. As moral creatures we are influenced by the consideration of moral qualities—we love and hate on moral grounds, and act accordingly. The great motive or impelling affection by which we should be influenced, as being thus constituted, is supreme love to God. And, further, by the arrangements of the divine government with respect to us, we are brought under judicial treatment, which, though specially based on the moral, applies itself to the social and the sentient in the constitution of our nature. God regards us, and will deal with us, according to our deeds. In dealing thus with us, he employs to a considerable extent the judgments pronounced respecting us by our fellow-men, and their procedure towards us upon those judgments. To adapt us to the position which we thus occupy, he has formed us to pay a certain regard to their judgments, and has placed us in such circumstances that we may be materially affected by them. Being thus the subjects of moral government, and of moral government thus administered, we should have supreme respect to God—to the judgments which he pronounces, and to his visitations, and we should have respect to man’s judgments, whether only pronounced or also executed, according to the importance given to them in the divine plan ; but the tendency of our fallen nature is to have supreme and exclusive regard to these latter. This is the deviation from true righteousness, against which our Lord warns his dis-

ciples, in the passage which engaged our attention in last section.

2. As sentient creatures we are influenced by a regard to such things as affect, or, as we suppose, will affect us with pleasure or pain ; or, in other words, to such things as we view as sources of happiness. Here the contest lies between a supreme regard to things on earth, and a supreme regard to things in heaven—the two classes of things that present themselves to us as sources of happiness. Things in heaven are the true source of happiness, and a due regard to these is the great motive by which we should be influenced as sentient creatures. The deviation from righteousness, against which the passage now under consideration is directed, is that of substituting for this motive regard to things on earth.

3. Things on earth may be viewed in their relation to our temporal wants, and, viewed in this light, we are constrained, and it is our duty, to bestow upon them a certain regard. But they may be viewed also as the source of happiness ; and it is when, viewing them in this light, we labour to acquire and accumulate them, that we pursue the course forbidden in our passage—that of laying up for ourselves treasures on earth. It is not, however, those only who professedly disregard things in heaven, or deny their existence, and devote themselves wholly to things on earth, that pursue this course, but also those who, though as regards their belief they own things in heaven, yet, in the meantime, and so long as they can, occupy themselves exclusively with things on earth, as the only things for which they have any relish. Multitudes attend to heavenly things as a man pays the yearly premium for the insurance of his house. He has no longing, if he is acting honestly in the matter, for the sum in which his house is insured ; what he desires is, the comfortable occupation of his house uninterrupted by any casualty, and he insures only to provide against casualties ; so they have no longing or relish for heavenly things,

—what they desire is, the continued enjoyment of earthly things, and it is only to provide against the cessation of the enjoyment of them that they attend to heavenly things. Such being the case, it is evident that earthly things are their “treasures,” and they would confine their attention to them, but that they know their possession of them must be resigned. The attention they give to heavenly things they give not from choice but from necessity; it is only to earthly things they attend from choice.

4. Those who lay up for themselves treasures in heaven, relish and value heavenly things. They regard them as their portion; while they regard earthly things in no higher light than as necessary for their present accommodation. Earthly things are rendered necessary for them by their present wants; and it is only as being thus necessary for them that they value them; but they have a relish and craving for heavenly things, and desire, therefore, the present enjoyment of them, so far as it may be attainable, and, ultimately, the full and eternal possession of them. They view and employ earthly things as means of attaining to this enjoyment and possession. Such being the position which they assign to them, they are ready to forego or forfeit them to any extent for the sake of heavenly things. It is to the securing of heavenly things that, so far as their own advantage is concerned, their whole activity is directed.

5. The exhortation that we lay up for ourselves treasures in heaven, and not on earth, is enforced by the consideration, that things on earth are corruptible and insecure, while it is otherwise with things in heaven. Things on earth are adapted to a temporary state, and, therefore, are themselves temporary,—they pass away; moth and rust assail them, and under various agencies they perish. And, even though they were not liable to present corruption and decay, the time will come when the earth and the works that are therein shall be burned up. And, further, our possession of

them is insecure. In the present state, things are not adjusted and reduced to their permanent condition. On the contrary, there is much derangement and conflict, and consequently unceasing changes,—changes for the exercise, development, and trial of character, and changes for purposes of judgment. To indicate this insecurity, our Lord refers to one of its causes,—“thieves break through and steal.”

6. On the other hand, things in heaven are not perishable or insecure. Pertaining to a permanent state, they bear a corresponding character of permanency. They are not subject in any respect to a law of decay; the divine determination with respect to them is, that they shall endure for ever. And no insecurity attaches to the possession of them; in heaven thieves do not break through and steal.

7. Such are the rival and competing portions; and surely it is the greatest folly for an immortal being to choose a portion that is transitory and insecure, and to reject a portion that is stable and enduring. Nor can the earthly treasure, when it passes away, be replaced with the heavenly treasure, “for where the treasure is, there will the heart be also.” Those who devote themselves to earthly things would be incapable of enjoying heavenly things, though they had unrestricted access to them. Thus, apart altogether from any positive penal inflictions, they should be miserable; their chosen portion vanishing, while they had no relish for the only remaining portion, they should necessarily endure the deep and unmitigated wretchedness of eternal destitution.

SECT. IV.—RIGHTEOUSNESS DISCRIMINATED AS REGARDS THE  
PERFORMANCE OF POSITIVE DUTY—DIVIDED REGARDS  
IMPOSSIBLE.—(C. d. f.)—vi. 22-34.

1. But, though our regard to things on earth may not be exclusive, may it not operate co-ordinately with our regard to things in heaven? This view our Lord rejects in the

passage now under consideration, as at once unsound and impracticable. If the heart bestowed co-ordinate regards on things in heaven and things on earth, its state would be attended with a practical evil similar to that which attends double vision. When the eye sees double, instead of presenting distinctly and alone the object to be examined, and directing the whole attention to it, it diverts and distracts the attention by presenting two objects. Thus the design of vision is frustrated, and, the proper organ for supplying light failing to fulfil its office, the body is in a state of darkness; its movements and operations are performed not only without the advantage of the proper guidance, but under the influence of misinformation. Where one object is entitled to the entire undivided attention, a second object is presented as having an equal claim to consideration. In like manner, if the heart divided its regards between heavenly and earthly treasures, what is really, as respects our interests as sentient creatures, the object of supreme regard, would no longer be presented and viewed as such; another object would be placed side by side with it, as having independent and co-ordinate claims. Thus, a sort of double vision would arise, in consequence of which the soul would be full of darkness, and life would proceed upon an erroneous view of the bearing that should be given to its efforts.

2. But, while this distribution of our regards, if it actually took place, would plunge us, not into the darkness of mere ignorance, but into the deeper darkness of error, and would impart to our whole course the character of one fatal wandering, the real fact is, that it cannot take place. The only allotment of our regards that is practicable, that can be maintained or even realised, is the bestowal of them on one object as supreme, and on all others that have any claim to them as subordinate. If we attempt to make two independent objects co-ordinately supreme objects of regard, the result will be that one of them will be sunk to the rank of

a subordinate object, and that the other alone will remain supreme. There is the same difficulty here as there would be in "serving two masters." Each claiming the whole time and the entire services, it would be impossible to satisfy both, or to adopt any arrangement or compromise in which both would acquiesce. Under these circumstances, the servant would escape from the difficulty by giving preference to one of the rival masters. Guided by his own predilection, or by his estimate of their respective claims, "he would hate the one and love the other, or," if he did not proceed so far, he would, practically, "hold to the one and despise the other." Nor is this merely an analogous case. Any attempt to make two independent and co-ordinate objects supreme objects of regard, would actually involve such a competition of opposing claims; for he that "lays up for himself treasures in heaven," serves God, and he that "lays up for himself treasures on earth," serves Mammon; and these rival and contending services it is impossible to reconcile. Thus there is no course open to us, if we would not resign ourselves to a supreme regard to earthly treasures and serve Mammon, but that of maintaining a supreme regard to heavenly treasures and serving God; or, in other words, that of maintaining a supreme regard to God as our sovereign and our portion.

3. But it may be thought that, though we should not lay up for ourselves *treasures* upon earth, we must, at least, be careful to make provision for the supply of our bodily wants. If we regard the making of this provision as a thing that devolves upon ourselves, and with respect to which we must exercise a special solicitude, taking thought for our life, what we shall eat and what we shall drink, and for our body, what we shall put on,—the supply to be provided thus becomes to us, first, a distinct, and then, further, from the impossibility of co-ordination here, the supreme object of regard and pursuit; and we shall be found laying up for ourselves treasures on earth and serving Mammon.

4. What course, then, is to be pursued? We are subject to bodily wants, and how are they to be supplied? It is of great importance that this question be correctly answered; for on the answer given to it the aspect and aim of life greatly depend. Let it be observed, then, that God is conducting the affairs of our world to the accomplishment of certain ends—the manifestation of his own glory, and the blessedness of all his righteous subjects. While he is himself thus engaged, he calls upon us to concur and co-operate with him; and the prescribed course of concurrence and co-operation is so arranged, that, while we pursue it with a view to the ultimate ends to be reached, all the intermediate results in which we are interested will arise. By our pursuit of it, or otherwise in connection with our pursuit of it, he will grant us those results. This he has undertaken and engaged to do. Trusting in him, therefore, as to all such results, we are to employ ourselves under his direction in seeking the great ends which he prescribes to us. The efforts which he enjoins us to make may, to a great extent, be such as bear directly on intermediate results, and may seem wholly to terminate in them; but, still, they are to us a part of the course by which we are to proceed to the ultimate ends to be sought by us, in concurrence and co-operation with him, and we are to view them in this light—“Whether therefore ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.”—(1 Cor. x. 31.) We are to surrender ourselves wholly to God as our Father, that he may employ us in his own service, trusting in him for every supply that may, in the meantime, be necessary for us.—“Take no thought, saying, What shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or wherewithal shall we be clothed? for your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things; but seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you.”—(Matt. vi. 31-33.)

5. To this exercise of trust in God, which alone can liberate us from the service of Mammon, our Lord presents various motives and encouragements; and, first, he refers to the experience and proof which we have already had of the divine goodness and bounty. God has given us life, and life is more than the food which is necessary for its support; he has formed our bodies, and the body is more than the raiment which it needs. And having received from him what is greater, shall we not trust in him for what is less?—(Ver. 25.) To encourage trust in God for food, our Lord adduces the case of the fowls of the air. “They sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns.” They exercise no forethought or industry; and yet God feedeth them. Relieving them of all necessity of taking thought for their life, what they shall eat and what they shall drink, he himself makes provision for them. And, if he thus feeds the fowls of the air, are there not far stronger reasons why he should feed his people? In the first place, his people are much better than the fowls of the air.—(Ver. 26.) They are a far higher order of creatures, fitted and intended to serve far higher purposes. Viewed as mere denizens of this earth, they are creatures of far higher rank. Their bodily organization surpasses, in many particulars, that of any other creatures upon earth, being evidently adapted to a more exalted sphere; and their mental powers raise them to a still loftier superiority. And then they are more than denizens of this earth. They are immortal beings, and heirs of heaven. They have already been renewed after the image of God, and, by the continued process of renewal carried forward in their case, they shall in due time be prepared for heavenly glory and blessedness. Shall not He, then, who feeds the fowls of the air, feed *them*? And, further, God is their Father. He is the creator and preserver of the fowls of the air; but his people are his adopted children, and he is thus in a close

and peculiar sense their Father. By assuming this relation to them, he assumed, as one of the obligations which attach to it, the obligation to provide for them, and, at the same time, regarding them with paternal love, he is disposed to provide for them. As their Father, he is conducting them, to a glorious inheritance in heaven; and it is a part of his purpose with respect to them which he is thus executing, that he will in the meantime supply their bodily wants. Nor is it with him as with earthly fathers, whose power and means are very limited, and who often can accomplish but a small portion of what they desire and even design. The almighty Sovereign and Proprietor of the universe can accomplish all his pleasure. Shall he not, then, feed his children? Feeding the fowls of the air, though he sustains to them only the more remote relation of Creator, shall he not feed his people, to whom he sustains the closer relation of Father? Shall he not feed them, in that all things are his?

6. And, while believers have thus every encouragement to trust in God, they will gain nothing by taking thought; for none of them, by taking thought, can prolong his own life, even for the shortest period. The word, which in verse 27 is rendered "stature," denotes also *age*, or *the duration of life*; and, from the connection, it must be taken here in this latter sense. The subject under consideration is the support of life, as we see from the statement of it in verse 25,— "Take no thought for your life;" and the question, "Which of you, by taking thought, can add even the briefest space to the duration of his life?" is intended to detect and expose the folly of relying upon our own efforts for the support of it. The increase of our "stature," is an idea which does not at all fit into the connection. Such an increase is a result to which the thought-taking, to which men are so prone, is never directed. No difficulty, in the way of the proposed rendering, arises from the word "cubit," for terms expressive

of material dimension are often applied to time. The object of our Lord is to dissuade his people from taking thought for their life, by discovering to them the utter uselessness of their taking thought for it. They cannot prolong it by a single hour. God has reserved to himself the determination of its duration. The only rational and available course for them, therefore, is to trust in him for all that is necessary for its support.

7. From the exercise of trust in God for food, our Lord's exhortation passes on to the exercise of trust in him for raiment. And as, to encourage trust in the former case, he referred to his liberality in feeding the fowls of the air, so, to encourage trust in this latter case, he refers to his liberality in clothing the lilies of the field. The lilies "toil not, neither do they spin;" they take no thought, and make no effort; and yet, "God so clothes them, that even Solomon in all his glory," in the utmost splendour of regal state, "was not arrayed like one of them." If God thus clothes the grass of the field, which occupies so low a place among his creatures, and clothes it thus to-day, though to-morrow it is to be cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe his people, who occupy the highest place among his creatures on earth, and are the heirs of eternal glory? How weak is their faith, if they doubt that he will be as bountiful to them as he is to the grass!—(Ver. 28-30.)

8. While believers have thus abundant encouragement to trust in God for all that is necessary for them in the present life, if they do not exercise this trust, but "take thought, saying, What shall we eat, or what shall we drink, or wherewithal shall we be clothed," they exalt earthly things to the same place which the idolatrous Gentiles assigned to them—they "seek after" them as their portion, and make them the supreme objects of their regard. Instead of acting this heathenish part, they should deem it enough that all their wants are known to their heavenly Father, who is able and

willing, and has engaged to supply them.—(Ver. 32, 33.) Besides, it is only with the present that we are to deal; it will not be time to deal with the things of the morrow till the morrow has arrived. If we attempt to deal with them sooner, we only increase to no purpose the portion of evil allotted to the present. And, while it is with the present that we are to deal, we are to deal with it as placing duty before us. The duty which it places before us may be such that it bears upon the future; but, still, it is as present duty that we have to do with it. God will regulate its prospective operation, and will thus and otherwise determine the future for us.—(Ver. 34.)

## SECT. V.—DETAILED EXPOSITION.

VER. 21.—*Ye have heard that it was said by them of old time.*—Rather, “to them of old time,” for the dative here has the proper force of the dative. The advantages sought by assigning to it the ablative sense, which the dative, no doubt, sometimes assumes, are most effectually secured, as we shall forthwith see, by adhering to its distinctive signification. The words, as they run, when this latter course is adopted, present an exact description of tradition, which is just the conveyance and rehearsal to those of the present time, so that they also *hear* it, of what was said, or is alleged to have been said, “to them of old time.” The traditional legislation could not be traced to adequate *personal* authority. Viewed as law-givers, those from whom it proceeded, known or unknown, were “nothing in the world.” Accordingly, in estimating its claim to obedience, no account is made of them; the verb employed in adverting to its origin is used impersonally—“It was said.” It mattered not by whom the sayings referred to were uttered, for they were not uttered by any that possessed, what was indispensable in the case, legislative authority. There are thus great propriety and significance in the igno-

ing silence respecting the authors of the traditional sayings, which our text, as we understand it, maintains. Nor is there any ground for the apprehension, that unless we take "them of old time," as denoting those *by* whom the traditional sayings were uttered, and not those *to* whom they were addressed, "It was said," must be referred to Moses.

*Thou shalt not kill.*—These are the words of the law (Exod. xx. 13); but the scribes and pharisees corrupted the prohibition, which they express, by restricting it to the outward act specified. See Part III., sect. i., par. 7. That they thus restricted it, is evident from our Lord's vindication of its true breadth and import in the following verse.

*Shall be in danger of the judgment.*—In the next verse the "judgment" is classed with the sanhedrim or "council." We are thus led to regard it as, like the council, a court of justice; and it is evident that no court can be intended, but one that had jurisdiction in cases of murder. Now, there were only two Jewish courts that had jurisdiction in such cases; and, as the council was one of these, the other of them, a court composed of seven members, erected in places of which the population exceeded 120, is the only court that can be understood as denoted by the "judgment,"—a very natural name for a body to whose *judgment* multitudes of cases were submitted, and which derived its distinctive and great importance to the community from the function of *judgment* which it exercised. When, in dealing with murder, this court pronounced sentence of death, the confirmation of the council was necessary before the sentence could be executed. We regard it as confirmatory of the view of the "judgment" now presented, that *gehenna*, which unquestionably denotes a *punishment*, and not a judicial tribunal, is not classed with the "judgment" and the "council," but distinctly referred to a different class. Three cases and degrees of criminality are specified, and represented as respectively entailing *obnoxiousness* to the judgment, the council, and the

gehenna of fire. Now, while the relation to the judgment, and to the council, with which this obnoxiousness is attended, or which it bears, is, in the case of each, as being one and the same relation—a relation to things of the same class—expressed by the dative, the relation to gehenna, with which it is attended, or which it bears, is expressed by *εἰς*, followed by the accusative. This difference of construction agrees exactly with the difference between obnoxiousness to a court and obnoxiousness to a punishment. Criminality, in the first place, entails immediate obnoxiousness to the proper court, the relation resulting being exactly such as the dative expresses; and then, further, obnoxiousness to punishment, as the issue *unto* which all proceedings in the matter properly conduct.

In terms, the traditional dictum, “Shall be in danger of the judgment,” simply announced the penal sanction attached to the prohibition to which it referred; it regarded that prohibition, however, as restricted to the outward act specified, and consequently implied, that that act alone should be judicially visited as a violation of it. And it thus restricted judicial visitation on the part, not only of human, but also of the divine government. And, clearly, if there had been ground for the restriction of the prohibition, there would have been equal ground for this limitation. God will punish only what he has forbidden.

One of the laws which God had given to the Jews as a civil community, provided and required that culpable manslaughter should be punished with death, but did not extend to malicious anger or contemptuous demeanour; and the disciples of tradition seem to have confounded with this law, the moral enactment, “Thou shalt not kill;” and, having done so, they would of course reduce the application of it within the same limits. If they once confounded the one law with the other—the law administered directly by God with the law administered by human magistracy, regarding them as

one and the same law, enforced under both administrations, they would naturally express the enforcement of them in its whole extent, in terms derived from the institutions and the procedure of human administration. This, we apprehend, they did in the dictum of our text. According to this view, the force of that dictum would naturally be,—and we know, from our Lord's treatment of it, that the force of it actually was,—whosoever shall kill, and, under this prohibition, he only, shall be obnoxious to the judicial and penal visitation, of which the first—the mundane—process is conducted by the “judgment.”

The scribes and pharisees seem also to have regarded the comparative degrees of punishment allotted to different offences here, as indicating the comparative degrees of future punishment with which they should be visited. And, doubtless, the Mosaic criminal code furnished ground for such a view. When, entertaining this view, they represented manslaughter as entailing obnoxiousness to the judgment, which could condemn only to death by the sword, the mildest form of capital punishment among the Jews, this representation implied, that it exposed only to a corresponding, that is, to a correspondingly low, degree of future punishment. Here our Lord joined issue with them.

VER. 22.—*But I say unto you.*—In this announcement our Lord refers to “It was said to them of old time.” The traditional sayings were wholly unsupported by *personal* authority; they were laws which nobody had enacted. Not so *his* sayings; these rested on *his* authority. “I” is thus emphatic. To the announcement of tradition, “It was said,” our Lord opposes, “I say.”

The practically important question for each individual is, not what is it that was said to those of former ages, or that is now said to others, but what does the Lord say to me? What I have to do is, not to import into my own mind the belief of others, and their practice into my life, but to believe

and do what the Lord says to myself. Even a sound belief, if merely traditional, is without vitality; and a correct practice, if merely traditional, is without significance. If we would be subjects of Christ's kingdom, our faith and our practice must be more than such fossil remains of the past, they must be living products of the present; they must spring from our personal dealings with the Lord—from his speaking to us, so that we hear and proceed accordingly.

*Whosoever is angry with his brother without a cause.*—All men are our brethren; they and we are members of one family. There are also still closer brotherhoods; but, on the ground of this universal brotherhood, it is due to all men that we regard them with brotherly affection, and treat them with brotherly kindness, that there be nothing unbrotherly in our feelings or conduct towards them. But anger “without a cause”\* is most unbrotherly. And “whosoever is angry with his brother,” is angry “without a cause.” Our fellow-man is supposed in our text to stand before us simply as our “brother,” and, if we are angry with him while he is presented to us only under this character, our anger is “without a cause;” it is not called forth by any thing reprehensible on his part, but must spring from an unbrotherly, malicious spirit on our own.

Our fellow-man, however, does not always stand before us simply as a “brother.” Like those, for example, who watched our Lord whether he would heal on the Sabbath the man that had a withered hand, he may stand before us characterised by extreme hardness of heart; and, when he presents such a character, it is not unlawful, as our Lord's example in the case to which we have just referred clearly teaches, to regard him with anger.—(Mark iii. 5.) There are thus two kinds of anger—the anger of righteous reprobation and displeasure, which is distinctly authorised (Eph.

\* The word so rendered has by some been rejected from the text; it is supported, however, by a preponderance of authority.

iv. 26), and malicious anger, which we are required to "put away from" us.—(Eph. iv. 31.)

Malicious anger, which, as we have already seen, is the anger intended in our text, is the first going-forth and display of the spirit which impels to murder, the first visible step on the path to this awful crime.

*Shall be in danger of the judgment.*—Rejecting the scheme of punishment adopted by the scribes and pharisees, which was at once an effect and a cause of low views of the sinfulness of sin, our Lord here announces that malicious anger, the first overt movement towards murder, would be visited with as sore a punishment as, according to that scheme, awaited the consummated offence. By employing their own phraseology, he brings out the more distinctly the great and important difference between his teaching and theirs.

*Raca.*—See Intro., sect. ii., par. 9. Our Lord seems to trace from stage to stage the working and manifestation of the unbrotherly spirit. It is first manifested in a corresponding affection or emotion—in anger, then in vilifying or depreciatory judgment—in saying "Raca" to one's brother, and at a still more advanced stage in condemnatory judgment, in saying to him "thou fool."

Man, viewed as an immortal and accountable being, with whom God is dealing every moment, and who, consciously or unconsciously, is every moment dealing with God, the most stupendous interests depending on the visitations, transactions, and activities through which he is thus passing, is invested with awful greatness. While this greatness is recognised, his person will be held sacred. Accordingly, he that would gain access to him with deeds of violence, must first strip him of his greatness, and break down the hedge with which it surrounds him. In proceeding against him he must begin with disparaging him, and, as it is the treatment given to him directly and personally that is in question, with disparaging him to his face, as by saying to him "Raca."

—(See on ver. 11.) This term of disparagement, equivalent, probably, to *empty*, *vain*, was in common use among the Jews. It had the force, not of an ascription of degrading, but of a denial of elevating qualities. To apply it to a brother, under the influence of the malicious spirit of which the working is here traced, would be to brand him as of no account.

*Shall be in danger of the council.*—The treatment of a brother just indicated, should be visited with as sore a punishment as, according to the traditional scheme, awaited those high crimes, such as blasphemy and idolatry, with which the council alone could deal, and which it punished with death by stoning.

*Thou fool.*—This we understand as the language of positive condemnation, and not of mere disparagement. When Christ applies the term here used to the scribes and pharisees, in Matt. xxiii. 17, 19, he emphatically condemns them, regarding the folly with which he charges them, and the conduct in which it was exhibited, as highly criminal.—(Ver. 13–16, 23, 25, 27, 29, 33.) It would, indeed, be inconsistent with our Lord's character, and with the spirit of his teaching, to call them "fools," if they were chargeable only with excusable folly,—such folly as in no way exposed them to just condemnation. In like manner, it denotes reprehensible folly, in the peroration of the sermon on the mount (Matt. vii. 26), and in the parable of the ten virgins (Matt. xxv. 2, 3, 8).

Perhaps, however, the term rendered "thou fool," is not Greek, but, as some have regarded it, a Hebrew word, which signifies a *rebel*, an *apostate*, in which case it is very emphatically expressive of positive condemnation.

Here, also, we are to regard the language employed as breathing an unbrotherly spirit.

*Shall be in danger of hell fire.*—Literally, the gehenna of fire. It would be an aggravation of the punishment if the dead body were cast into the valley of the children of Hin-

nom, to lie there unburied, and to be at last burned with fire; and it may be such an aggravation that our Lord here indicates. Or he may intend the punishment, whether known or unknown to the criminal jurisprudence of the nation, of being burned alive in the fires of gehenna. The idea conveyed is, that the offence described would be visited with the greatest severity of future punishment that the traditional scheme recognised.

If we take "the gehenna of fire" in the sense in which it was understood by our translators, our interpretation must proceed upon the view that our Lord indicates a sorer punishment than any that tradition denounced, and that, accordingly, the phraseology of tradition, which he had hitherto used, now failing him, he indicates it in direct terms, and which, because direct, are expressive of its awful severity. Thus viewed, the force of his language is, "He that gives to his brother the treatment described, shall be obnoxious to a punishment, the severity of which—for I have already exhausted your defective scheme—I shall indicate only by its proper designation,—to hell fire." Such a conception of the meaning is necessary, and, we think, sufficient to reconcile the rendering of our translators with the previous denunciations of the punishment, which, according to that rendering, is here specified in direct terms,—the terms employed, however, being so chosen that the intended gradation of punishment is maintained.

The teaching of our text, according to both views, is the same; but the view first presented, that a certain degree of future punishment is indicated in terms expressive, in the first place, and literally, of a certain degree of temporal punishment, is, we think, to be preferred. It is the view most in harmony with the preceding portion of the verse.

Gehenna is the Greek form of the Hebrew for *valley of Hinnom*. In this valley were built the high places of Tophet, in which the Israelites made their sons and their daughters

to pass through the fire to Moloch.—(1 Kings xi. 7; Jer. vii. 31). In destroying idolatry, Josiah defiled Tophet.—(2 Kings xxiii. 10, 14). And it would seem that thenceforward, as if to perpetuate its defilement, dead bodies that were to be left unburied were cast into it (Jer. vii. 32, 33); and from time to time burned with fire. From this latter circumstance, it would be appropriately called “the gehenna of fire.” And there are evident grounds on which the name of a locality, so associated with the severest punishment of crime,—the punishment of it even after the close of this life, and without intermission, for there, it might be said, “the worm died not, and the fire was not quenched,”—should be transferred to the place of eternal punishment.

VER. 23.—*Therefore*.—Seeing that whosoever acts, more or less, an unbrotherly part, is thus obnoxious to punishment, it behoves and concerns thee, if thou hast acted such a part, to make it thy first care to obtain forgiveness. Such are the connection and dependence which “therefore” indicates.

*If thou bring thy gift to the altar*.—This translation presents the view of the meaning usually taken. To this view, however, there is the obvious objection that the verb employed denotes, not the *bringing* of a gift that it may be offered (Lev. v. 11, 12; also 6, 7, 8, where the simple verb is used), but the actual *offering* of it.—(Matt. ii. 11, viii. 4; Acts vii. 42; Heb. v. 1, 3, viii. 3, 4, ix. 9).\* It is in this sense it is used in the next verse, and it there unquestionably denotes the very same act it denotes here. *Here* that act is viewed as begun and in progress; it then suffers interruption, and *there* the direction is given to resume and complete it. Throughout it is the same act. We render, accordingly, —*if thou be offering thy gift upon the altar*. This rendering has been regarded as inadmissible, because the “gift,” after

\* In Lev. xvii. 4, we have the simple verb to denote the *bringing*, and the compound verb of our text to denote the *offering* of a gift.

this supposition had been realised, would be still "before the altar," and because, further, to place it "upon the altar" was the part of the priest. If, however, the person addressed could "offer his gift" at all—and it is admitted that, in the next verse, he is directed to offer it—he could offer it "upon the altar;" for it is only upon the altar it could be offered. In the case supposed, the service to be performed was the offering of a gift upon the altar; the person who brought the gift could not *personally* perform the whole of this service,—at a certain stage it would be necessary for him to employ the agency of the priest; but still, notwithstanding this employment of the agency of another, it is by him, as the party with whom the offering originated, whose views and exercises, supposing him sincere, it would express and embody, by whom its specific reference and significance would thus be imparted to it, and at whose instance and in execution of whose intention and desire it would throughout be conducted, that the gift would be offered on the altar. The priest, so far as regards the point with which we are now concerned, would be simply his agent,—he himself would be the principal, the proper offerer.—(Lev. xvii. 5.) Thus, the phraseology of our text is founded upon and presents the true nature of the case. Interpreters, with too little confidence in its accuracy, have generally forced it into conformity to a superficial view.

The full expression, "If thou be offering thy gift upon the altar," is employed, and not the abbreviated form, "If thou be offering thy gift," that, by the mention of "the altar," the idea of the sacredness and solemnity of the service might be distinctly and forcibly conveyed, and that thus the claims of a duty, for the sake of which such a service should be interrupted, might be placed in the strongest light.

When an Israelite was engaged in offering his gift upon the altar, he had already brought it to the temple, and was now in one of the courts to which those who were offering

their gifts had access. Thus the supposition, "If thou be offering thy gift upon the altar," indicates a certain place.

*There rememberest.*—"There,"—in the place indicated in the previous supposition. . The sacredness and solemnity of the place and of the occasion would be peculiarly fitted to revive the memory of past offences. It is a gross and obvious perversion to regard the case put by our Lord as implying any authority or permission to defer, until we are about to partake of the Lord's supper, the duty which he inculcates. The very object of his illustration is to teach that this duty is not to be deferred under any circumstances, not even though the performance of it might, for a time, interrupt the most solemn religious service. Besides, there is no reference to the Lord's supper, which was not yet instituted.

*That thy brother hath ought against thee.*—Having condemned unbrotherly conduct under all its forms (ver. 22), our Lord now supposes that the person addressed has been guilty of such conduct, and has thus given his brother cause of dissatisfaction and complaint. This is obviously the meaning. It is evident, from the context, and from the force of the expression employed, that in the supposed case the person addressed is the offender (Mark xi. 25; Rev. ii. 4, 14, 20), and that his brother has real cause of dissatisfaction and complaint, and does not merely suppose himself aggrieved. He whom Christ represents as having somewhat against another, *has* somewhat against that other; the grievance to be dealt with in the case is real, and not imaginary.

VER. 24.—*Leave there thy gift before the altar.*—The person engaged in offering his gift upon the altar is viewed as now before the altar with it, having reached the stage at which he would commit it to the priest, that he might actually offer it by the hands of that functionary,—the most advanced stage at which he could delay the offering of it. But though he has proceeded so far, he is directed to inter-

mit the service, and, leaving his gift before the altar, to take immediate steps to be reconciled to his brother.

*Go thy way, first be reconciled to thy brother.*—If he were required only to dismiss from his own bosom the spirit which he had manifested towards his brother, whether in being angry with him, or in saying to him “Raca,” or “Thou fool,” or otherwise, he might do this without “going his way;” but what he has to do is to obtain his brother’s forgiveness; and accordingly he is directed to proceed to his brother. The case put is, that his brother has somewhat against him. This is the case with which he has to deal; and the proper mode of dealing with it clearly is, to sue for pardon at his brother’s hands. The change to be effected is not a change in his feelings towards his brother, which may now be altogether such as they ought to be, nor yet exactly in his brother’s feelings towards him, but a change in his relations to his brother. He has forfeited, not his brother’s love, but the relation to him of an *accepted* brother; and what he needs, therefore, is that his brother would pardon and accept him, that he might thus regain this relation.

It is a corresponding change that takes place when sinners are reconciled to God; a relative, and not a moral change—the change, under one of its aspects, which is effected in justification, the blotting out of sin, and the turning away of the anger which it provoked.\* The doctrine is held, however, that reconciliation is a moral change on the part of sinners—a transition from the enmity with which they regard God in their natural state, to the love with which they ought to regard him, and to the spirit of loyalty which should distinguish them as his subjects; that *his* anger has already been turned away, and that nothing further, therefore, is necessary in order to reconciliation but that *they* lay aside their enmity against him. This doctrine, it

\* Justification comprehends, also, the imputation of Christ’s righteousness, and the acceptance of those to whom it is imputed.

will be perceived, consists of two parts, setting forth the state of things which precedes reconciliation, and what constitutes it; and both branches of it are unscriptural. The anger of God is not turned away from sinners before they believe; for it is only such as are justified by faith that have peace with him.—(Rom. v. i.) “He that believeth not the Son shall not see life, but the wrath of God abideth on him.”—(John iii. 36.) Christ having made atonement, it is compatible with the righteousness and the honour of the divine government that God deal with sinners respecting salvation; but, until they personally receive the atonement, he cannot regard them otherwise than as guilty rebels; and it is when he no longer regards them as such that they are reconciled to him. Accordingly, of God’s procedure towards those whom he reconciles to himself the negative representation is, that he does “not impute their trespasses unto them” (2 Cor. v. 19); in other words, he does not regard and treat them as sinners,—he is no longer angry with them.

The fact that we are *exhorted* to be reconciled to God (2 Cor. v. 20) may seem inconsistent with this view of the nature of reconciliation. But God offers to us in Christ the pardon of sin and peace with himself; and the exhortation in question is simply an exhortation to accept of that offer, to believe in Christ that the offered benefit may be ours.

As regards the successive steps of the course presented, the person addressed is first to proceed from the offering of his gift, now for a time intermitted, to the proper position for entering on the specific duty to which he is recalled,—“Go thy way;” having thus disposed of preliminaries, he is to address himself to that duty, and to perform it *before* he resume the offering of his gift,—“First be reconciled to thy brother;” and, having performed it, he is “then” to resume the offering of his gift,—“Then come and offer thy gift.” There is a twofold procedure: first, a going forth and then a

return, the one corresponding step for step to the other. This correspondence, and the succession already indicated, may be thus exhibited :—

- |    |                                                            |
|----|------------------------------------------------------------|
| A. | If thou remember that thy brother hath sught against thee, |
| B. | a. Leave thy gift before the altar,                        |
|    | b. And go thy way;                                         |
| A. | First be reconciled to thy brother,                        |
| B. | b. And then come                                           |
|    | a. And offer thy gift.                                     |

In A., the offerer is supposed to discover an obstacle in his way, and in A. he is directed to remove it. And the course prescribed in B. is evidently the counterpart of the course prescribed in B. In B., the offerer is directed to leave his gift unoffered—(a.), and go—(b.); and in B. to come—(b.) and offer his gift—(a.)

In the illustrative case which we have now examined, our Lord, in evident and direct prosecution of the design of the sermon, combats the exaltation of mere outward religious observances, and the accompanying, and, indeed, implied disparagement and neglect of personal righteousness, which distinguished the pharisaical system. Accordingly, it is not the object of the illustration, as some have supposed, to show under what circumstances religious services will be accepted, but to set forth the paramount claims of personal righteousness, which is “more than all whole burnt-offerings and sacrifices.”—(Mark xii. 33, 34.)

VER. 25.—*Agree with thine adversary quickly.*—The brother, supposed to have somewhat against the person addressed, is viewed as ready to pardon and accept; accordingly, if the person addressed, the offender in the supposed case, is not pardoned and accepted by him, or, in other words, is not reconciled to him, the cause must be that he is still under the dominion of the malicious spirit which prompted his unbrotherly conduct towards him, and, consequently, has not taken the proper steps to be reconciled to him, by applying for pardon and acceptance. The exhortation now addressed

to him is therefore most appropriate. He is directed to “be well-disposed”—for this is the meaning of the word rendered “agree;” “to be well-disposed towards his adversary”—to regard him with brotherly love; and, if he so regard him, he will repent of his unbrotherly conduct towards him, and use prompt and proper means to obtain his forgiveness, and be thus reconciled to him. In the phraseology of this exhortation, “Be well-disposed,” &c., there is a beautiful and profound adaptation to the peculiar aspect under which the blessing denoted by *reconciliation* is presented by that term. In the sphere of our spiritual interests, reconciliation consists in peace with God. Now, peace with God may be viewed in one or other of two lights,—either as involving and carrying in it pardon and judicial acceptance, or as attended with access to God or admission to communion with him. Viewed in the former light, it is peace with our Judge, and the prominent feature of men’s exercises in seeking it is concern for their eternal safety; but, viewed in the latter light, it is peace with our Father, and men are impelled to seek it by love to God and desires after him. It is under this latter aspect,—as giving access to one whom we love,—that peace with God is contemplated, when we speak of it as reconciliation. Thus, reconciliation implies a right state of feeling—being “well-disposed”—towards God, though it does not consist in such a state of feeling. Here we see the nature of the antithetic connection of reconciliation with enmity against God, which appears in some passages (Rom. v. 10; Col. i. 21), and which, we apprehend, has had no small influence in misleading the interpreters who view reconciliation as a moral change. Here, also, we have an instance both of the inseparable connection of the moral with the relative in religion, and of the necessity of carefully distinguishing the one from the other. Without clear views of the connection and the distinction between them, our theology must at best be confused, and will at least be

in danger of becoming unsound, either by overlooking the connection and diverging towards antinomianism, or by overlooking the distinction and diverging towards legalism.

If, in the supposed case of our text, a reconciliation is not effected, the aggrieved brother becomes virtually the "adversary" of the offender—the opposing, and, from the nature of the case, the pursuing party in a judicial process; an analogous state of matters arises to that which is realised when the plaintiff in a suit is proceeding with the defendant to the proper tribunal, and now, unless the latter come to terms with the former, "whiles he is in the way with him," the suit must take its course, and he must bear the unmitigated rigour of the judgment in which it will issue. So here the offender is on his way to the judgment-seat of God, and his aggrieved brother stands so far in the relation to him of "his adversary," or the plaintiff in the case, that unless he be reconciled to him, "whiles he is in the way with him," and before he reach the judgment-seat, an irreversible sentence will be pronounced, and the adjudged punishment will not be mitigated and cannot be evaded.

And as the time thus available for effecting a reconciliation may terminate in an instant, if a reconciliation is to be effected at all, it should be effected "quickly." There are other reasons why it should be quickly effected, but this is the consideration urged in our text.

The reader will perceive, that we do not regard our passage as a parable. There is, we apprehend, neither any necessity nor any ground for viewing it in that light. It is quite homogeneous with the preceding context, which is not treated as bearing a parabolical character. It is simply a continuation of the exhortation of verse 24, the language employed, like that of the doctrinal statement in verse 22, on which the exhortation is founded, being derived from the arrangements and procedure of human jurisprudence. Viewed thus, the passage is singularly beautiful, and affords a strik-

ing illustration of the perfect mastery of our Lord's teaching over the data, so to speak, which occasions and circumstances presented. However intractable those data might be, and in the present case they were not a little intractable, they became pliant and productive in his hands.

*Lest at any time the adversary deliver thee to the judge, &c.*—"Lest at any time," refers to the uncertain duration of the available season for effecting a reconciliation.—(See above on "quickly.") It does not imply that, no reconciliation taking place, the result is uncertain. When the case is once put in the hands of "the judge," there will be no prospect of a friendly adjustment. That stage once reached, every such prospect will wholly vanish, and the further stages will inevitably be reached—the judge will pronounce sentence, and "deliver" the now condemned offender "to the officer," to be dealt with in terms of the sentence pronounced, and the officer accordingly will "cast him into prison."

VER. 26.—*Verily I say unto thee.*—This emphatic asseveration was dictated by our Lord's estimate of the awful importance of the fact stated, and of the unbelief and insensibility which the statement of it would encounter.

*Until thou hast paid the uttermost farthing.*—Language derived from the liquidation of debt is, by an obvious and usual figure, applied to the endurance of punishment. The basis of this figurative phraseology is the conception of sin as a *debt*,—a conception of it presented in a subsequent part of the sermon (vi. 12, comp. verses 13, 14), and also in the parable of the unforgiving servant (Matt. xviii. 21–35.) The meaning accordingly is, "Until thou hast borne to the uttermost, without mitigation or abatement, the adjudged punishment." This interpretation recognises the unbroken continuousness of this part of our Lord's discourse. From ver. 23 downward, he deals with one who is supposed to have acted an unbrotherly part, and he here assures him

that if, unreconciled to the brother towards whom he has acted such a part, he pass into the presence of his judge, a sentence of condemnation will be pronounced upon him and executed in all its severity. We have already rejected the view that in this and the preceding verse he introduces parabolically a case of prosecution for debt, and it is only when that view is adopted that "paying the uttermost farthing" can be understood literally.

*Farthing.*—The word thus rendered is derived from the Latin, and in that language has the same etymological meaning as *farthing* has in English. It denotes the *fourth part* of an *as*, which latter was equal to somewhat more than  $\frac{3}{4}$ d.

"Till thou hast paid," does not at all imply that he can, or ever will, pay the uttermost farthing; but simply sets a limit which must be reached before he can be liberated.

It is altogether unnecessary to inquire whether the word rendered "prison" is ever used as an appropriated designation of the place of future punishment. The raising of such a question, as one with which the interpreter is here concerned,\* betrays a total misapprehension of the origin and character of the phraseology of our passage. Its phraseology, as we have already indicated, is derived from the arrangements and procedure of human jurisprudence. Accordingly, it is within the sphere of that jurisprudence that we must look for what it *properly* denotes—that is, for what it denotes when wholly free from diverting influences; but here it is subjected to such an influence, and transferred to the spiritual sphere, and therefore, in determining what it denotes, we must be guided by the analogy which things within this latter sphere bear to things within the former. Thus, as regards the word now under consideration, the question is not, what appropriated meaning it bears when applied to the final retributive pro-

\* Olshausen and Tholuck discuss this question as affecting the interpretation of this passage.

cedure of the divine government, but what within the sphere of this procedure is analogous to the punishment of imprisonment within the sphere of human jurisprudence.

This passage (ver. 25, 26) is one of those introduced by Luke in a different connection.—(Luke xii. 58, 59.)

VER. 27.—*Thou shalt not commit adultery.*—Here, as in ver. 21, we have the words of the law (Exod. xx. 14), and here also, as there, they are used in a restricted sense, as prohibiting only the outward act specified.—(See on ver. 21, and Part III., sect. i., par. 9.)

VER. 28.—*Whosoever looketh on a woman to lust after her, &c.*—In applying his first illustration, our Lord, as we have seen, interprets the prohibition, “Thou shalt not kill,” as referring not only to the outward act specified, but also to all the operations and to the very existence of the spirit which prompts to that act—the unbrotherly, malicious spirit.—(Ver. 22. See Part III., sect. ii., par. 1; sect. i., par. 3, 4, 7; and on ver. 22.) And here we have a similar vindication of the import and extent of the prohibition, “Thou shalt not commit adultery.”—(See Part III., sect. i., par. 9.)

The procedure described is that of “looking on a woman” deliberately with the intention of “lusting after her.” It is the opposite procedure to that which Job exacted from himself—“I have made a covenant with mine eyes; why then should I look upon a maid?”—(Job xxxi. 1.) The “looking” with such an intention presupposes “lusting.” Thus the case supposed is that of one who, in dealing with this antecedent lusting, excited perhaps by incidental seeing (2 Sam. xi. 2), or otherwise incidentally, does not resist and, as he may be able, extinguish it, but welcomes and cherishes it, and, under its influence, deliberately looks upon its object to give it all the scope and indulgence that circumstances permit.—(Job xxxi. 7; Ezek. xxiii. 14–16.)

“To lust after her” plainly expresses the intention, and not merely the result of the “looking.” If the “lusting”

were only an undesigned and unsought result, there might be nothing blameworthy in the "looking," but, in the case which our Lord describes, the "looking" is a part of the offence, or rather it constitutes the offence. The "looking" described, therefore, must be looking with the intention to lust, and not looking that is merely attended with that result. Besides, it is intention that in such a connection the words employed properly denote.—(Matt. vi. 1, xxiii. 5; James iii. 3.)

We cannot concur in the view, that, while our Lord says "a woman," without any limitation, he means only one class of women, namely, such as are married. The word employed is, of course, *applied* to married women; but it does not *denote* married women. The information that the women intended are married must be conveyed otherwise than by the use of this word. It is applied to a married woman in this very context (ver. 31, 32), but, then, it is not this term itself, but the specifying adjunct "his," that supplies the information that the woman there intended is married. We understand our Lord, therefore—strange it should be necessary to make such a statement!—as meaning just what he says, "a woman."

But does not the nature of the offence, which our Lord declares the person who looks upon a woman to lust after her has committed, imply that it is a married woman that is intended? To maintain the self-consistency of our Lord's language, or of the language of Scripture in any instance, it is not necessary to resort to exegetic emendations, which, though more common and less startling, are as much to be condemned as conjectural emendations of the text. They are, indeed, virtual, though not avowed, emendations of the text, and emendations of it when its purity is not called in question. "Thou shalt not commit adultery" is a prohibition, not of actual adultery only, but of all uncleanness. The conveyance of it in those terms, intimating that all forms of uncleanness fall

into the same category with adultery, and are, indeed, radically the same offence, would serve to correct, within the sphere of this prohibition, the extenuating views of sin to which fallen man is ever prone. But whatever were the reasons for prohibiting all uncleanness under the name of “adultery,” there were, we apprehend, the same reasons for adhering to this nomenclature in restoring the prohibition to its true meaning and legitimate extent of application. Besides, in dealing with the disciples of tradition, who recognised no violation of the prohibition but the offence expressly specified, the actual commission of adultery, it was necessary for our Lord to give prominence to the view on which the phraseology under consideration is founded, that in all uncleanness there is “adultery.” Accordingly, the force of our text is, It is not only he who defiles a married woman that violates the prohibition, “Thou shalt not commit adultery;” within the meaning of this prohibition he who even “looks upon a woman,” whether married or unmarried, “to lust after her, hath already,” though he has proceeded no farther, “committed adultery with her,” not indeed by outward act, but “in his heart.” The phraseology, to the minutest peculiarity, seems to have been chosen and moulded with the special design of indicating the extent of the prohibition, as directed not only against the outward act specified, but against the committing of uncleanness under any form, even “in the heart.”

VER. 29, 30.—*If thy right eye offend thee, &c.*—Having indicated the true meaning and the extent of the prohibition, our Lord proceeds to enforce it. With this view, he places in the strongest light the wisdom of submitting to any sacrifice which obedience to it may involve, rather than expose ourselves to the future and eternal punishment with which the violation of it will be visited. He puts a strong case, and, that the illustration which it affords may be the more impressive, he puts it as a case to be actually dealt with, using *si* with the indicative present (see Winer, § 42, 2 a),—

the case that "your right eye offends you," that its uniform mode of acting in the matter is and will be to cause you to stumble and violate this prohibition; and then, on that supposition, seeing there is no other way of preserving yourself from uncleanness, he exhorts you to pluck out the "offending" eye, and cast it from you. And, to engage you to comply with this exhortation, he calls upon you to consider, that, the alternative being that one member be thus destroyed or that your whole body be cast into hell, it is profitable for you that the former branch of this alternative and not the latter be realised. For the use of *iva*, which occurs here, see Winer, § 45, 9. That the case supposed cannot actually occur, does not at all render the supposition inadmissible or inappropriate. The object was to convey the lesson forcibly, that it is better to endure any pain and incur any disadvantage than to commit uncleanness; and, in a case supposed for conveying this lesson all that was necessary was, that, being suitable otherwise, it should be one that might be easily and clearly conceived; it was not at all necessary that it might actually occur. Perhaps, indeed, the circumstance that it might not actually occur might increase its appropriateness, by serving to intimate or to make the impression that it is better to incur not only any present evil that may actually befall us, but any present evil that can be conceived, than to commit uncleanness.

Among the members, it is the "eye" and the "hand" especially that may contribute to the excitement of unclean desires, and hence it is the "eye" and the "hand" that are supposed to precipitate into the indulgence of those desires. In this supposition they appear in the order in which they would perform their respective parts in "offending."

The adjunct "right" is added to set forth the greatness of the sacrifice we should be ready to make to preserve ourselves from uncleanness. To the "hand" this epithet is applied on the obvious ground that the *right* hand is greatly more ser-

viceable, and therefore more highly valued; and, from the preference to which the right hand is thus entitled, some degree of preference seems to be extended to the right eye, and *right*, as applied to it, is expressive of preference.

The alternative, "That thy whole body be cast into hell," is founded upon and implies the fact, that the "body" will be associated with the soul in enduring the punishment, as it is in the commission of sin (John v. 28, 29; Matt. x. 28); and it appeals powerfully to the very sympathy with the body, and the very tenderness for it, which naturally prompt to indulgence.

It will be observed, that the alternative evils presented in our passage are, on the one hand, partial and temporal suffering—the loss of an eye or a hand in this life; and, on the other, total and eternal ruin—that the "whole body"—"whole" being emphatic—"be cast into hell."

On another occasion, and with a different reference, our Lord expresses himself in language nearly identical with that of our passage.—(Matt. xviii. 8, 9).—(See Intro., sect. iii., par. 20–22.)

VER. 31.—*It hath been said*.—Here our Lord does not refer to the report of what was alleged to have been said, as he does in ver. 21, 27, 33, 38, 43; but himself states what was said.

*Whosoever shall put away his wife*.—This rule was founded upon the view implied in the question with which, upon another occasion, the Pharisees "tempted our Lord:"—"Is it lawful for a man to put away his wife for every cause?"—(Matt. xix. 3.)\* Moses had suffered the Israelites, with the view of preventing the evils that would otherwise arise from "the hardness of their hearts," to "put away their wives" under certain circumstances, only requiring that in

\* That they held the lawfulness of this procedure appears from the question with which they met our Lord's denial of the lawfulness of it.—(Matt. xix. 7.)

every case of this kind the husband should give to the wife "a bill of divorcement."—(Deut. xxiv. 1; Matt. xix. 8; Mark x. 5.) This permission, however, they greatly extended, by relaxing, and ultimately, in effect, removing, the restriction as to the circumstances to which it applied. They even went the length of converting it into a command; and, if a command at all, it was evidently such a command that, whenever it so happened that a man was desirous to put away his wife, it became his duty to do so.—(Matt. xix. 3, 7.)

By assuming this attitude with respect to the conjugal relation, they reduced marriage to the level of concubinage, and thus stamped upon it a character of impurity. At this point, and in this respect, they incurred the guilt of uncleanness. But what demands particular attention is, that, in claiming for themselves a right to make their escape at pleasure from the bonds of the conjugal relation, or, rather, in their zeal wholly to abolish those bonds, they were prompted throughout by "the lust of uncleanness." Their object was to preserve for themselves unrestricted scope for entering into new so-called matrimonial connections, and thus indulging that lust.

Such were the spirit and the import of the vile and baneful dictum against which our Lord here directs his discourse. In opposition to it he solemnly and authoritatively announces, "that whosoever putteth away his wife, saving for the cause of fornication, causeth her to commit adultery." Fornication dissolves the marriage covenant. A union is formed by the commission of it (1 Cor. vi. 15, 16) that is destructive of the conjugal union, and thus of the whole conjugal relationship. It is lawful, therefore, for a man to put away his wife if she be guilty of fornication. It is not lawful for him, however, to put her away under any other circumstances; for, while fornication dissolves the marriage covenant, fornication alone dissolves it. Whosoever,

therefore, puts away his wife under other circumstances, acts, if not directly, at least indirectly, in contravention of the prohibition, "Thou shalt not commit adultery." If he does not violate it in his own person by marrying another, or otherwise, he contravenes it by his treatment of his wife, by which "he causes her to commit adultery." By putting her away he exposes her to temptation—he does what tends and is calculated to make her commit adultery; and as men are to be judged by the tendency, and not by the actual effect of their conduct, he must be held guilty of "causing her to commit adultery." Nor is this all. His procedure towards his wife has a further hostile bearing upon the interests of purity. "Whosoever shall marry her that is divorced committeth adultery;" and *he* originated the conjuncture of circumstances from which this adulterous union may result.

In treating elsewhere of the same subject, our Lord makes a statement which does not occur in our passage—"Whosoever shall put away his wife, except it be for fornication, and shall marry another, committeth adultery."—(Matt. xix. 9; Mark x. 11; Luke xvi. 18.) This statement is directed against the desire and intention to "marry another," in which unjustifiable divorce generally originated; but in our text he is concerned only with the contravention of the prohibition, "Thou shalt not commit adultery," which unjustifiable divorce ever involves. Accordingly, it is only in the light of this contravention that he presents it. He who puts away his wife without sufficient cause may not himself marry another, but his treatment of his wife, in that he puts her away, tends to make *her* marry another, and thus to make her and that other commit adultery.

The term rendered "fornication," like *fornication* in English, is the generic name for acts of uncleanness; and, in the use of that term here, we have an instance of the profound agreement with the truth and relations of things

which characterises the language of our Lord's discourses. The unfaithfulness of a wife dissolves the marriage covenant, in virtue not of its specific character as adultery, but of its generic character as fornication; and our Lord, therefore, presents it under this latter character.

"Saving for the cause of fornication," in our text, is equivalent to "except it be for fornication," in Matt. xix. 9. This is the obvious meaning of the words, and the context, instead of disturbing, confirms it. The other interpretations that have been offered, and which may be seen in Tholuck's "Exposition," and in Wolf's "Curæ Phil. et Crit.," are forced and unnatural. Here, as too often elsewhere, interpreters, not perceiving the justness of the view really presented, labour to extort from the language a different view.

VER. 33.—*Thou shalt not forswear thyself*, &c.—(See Part III., sect. i., par. 11.)—This dictum was probably founded on Lev. xix. 12, and Deut. xxiii. 21, 22. Like the dicta which have already engaged our attention, it restricts the prohibition, which it professes to present, within the limits of "the letter," and thus to the outward act specified. That act is "forswearing one's self," as opposed to "performing," or rather, *rendering* or *paying*, "unto the Lord one's oaths." Accordingly, the oaths intended are such oaths as can be thus fulfilled, namely, promissory oaths, and these, as appears from the opposite rule laid down by our Lord (ver. 27), made in ordinary intercourse. Referring to this class of oaths, the dictum proceeds upon the lawfulness of making them at pleasure, forbidding, and forbidding only, the violation of them. Thus, in its practical bearing, it is rather a licence than a prohibition. It forbids only one thing, and, within the sphere to which it applies—the use of oaths in ordinary conversation—what it does not forbid, it virtually authorises.

*Render to the Lord thine oaths.*—This phraseology seems

to imply, that the promises confirmed by these oaths were made "to the Lord;" we apprehend, however, the meaning is, that when, in confirmation of their promises, men swear by God, or by any thing recognised by tradition as involving a sufficient reference to him, their promises are then binding,—it is due "to" God that they be fulfilled; this, of course, implying that when they swear otherwise their promises are not binding, and need not, from any regard for the accompanying oaths, be fulfilled. As regards this classification of oaths, we know that it occupied the place in the casuistry of the scribes and Pharisees which our interpretation assigns to it.—(Matt. xxiii. 16-19.)

VER. 34-36.—*Swear not at all*.—Our Lord is here dealing with the dictum of the preceding verse, and, accordingly, it is in reference to the sphere to which that dictum applies that he issues the prohibition, "Swear not at all." The import of the dictum, as we have seen, is, "You may swear in the ordinary intercourse of life; and when either expressly or constructively you swear by God, you must perform your oaths; but when you swear otherwise, you need not perform them." And in opposition to this legislation, and in reference, therefore, to the use of oaths in ordinary intercourse, our Lord says, "Swear not at all," thus prohibiting, within the sphere of ordinary intercourse, the use of all kinds of oaths.

The literal rendering is, *not to swear at all*, the verb being in the infinitive, depending upon "I say." Evidently, however, *not to swear at all*, in such a connection, has the force of the imperative.

"At all," or *altogether, wholly*, qualifies "swear," and the verb thus qualified denotes swearing in its whole extent, within the sphere to which both the traditional dictum and our Lord's relative vindication of the law apply. It is thus swearing in whole, not in part, within that sphere, that our Lord prohibits.

*Neither by heaven.*—Having forbidden swearing as a whole, our Lord, to render the prohibition if possible more decisive and explicit, expressly applies it to the different parts of this whole—the different kinds of oaths which tradition distinguished. In the system of the scribes and Pharisees, there were oaths that were binding and oaths that were not binding; and all the restriction it laid upon swearing was to forbid the former kind, unless there was an intention to perform the oaths made. And our Lord here goes into detail to meet this peculiarity of their system, and, employing the phraseology of their own classification, emphatically and expressly forbids both kinds and all kinds of oaths:—"Swear not at all; neither by heaven," &c.

In his enumeration, our Lord, we conceive, includes both kinds of oaths. The first two particulars—"Neither by heaven, neither by earth"—seem to be examples of oaths that are not binding; and the third particular—"Neither by Jerusalem"—seems to be an example of oaths that are binding; for the traditionists held that an oath sworn by a creature—and they instanced heaven and earth—was not binding; and that an oath by Jerusalem with the prefix  $\aleph$  or  $\beth$  was. Taking this view, the force of the detailed extension of the prohibition is, "Use neither those oaths which you treat as imposing no obligation, nor those which you regard as binding;" the enumeration of particulars being thus exhaustive, for "swearing altogether" or swearing as a whole consisted, according to the traditional scheme, of those two kinds of oaths. Probably, "swearing by one's head" is to be referred to the same class with "swearing by Jerusalem," in which case we have two examples of each kind of oaths. There seems also to be another difference between the two sets of examples. The reference to Jerusalem and to one's head, in swearing by them, seems to be, "So let it be done to Jerusalem, so let it be done to my head, as my perfidy will deserve if I do not perform this mine oath." According to this view, the

fundamental idea is, that the swearer values Jerusalem highly, that he values his head highly, and on the basis of this idea he declares that he stakes or risks Jerusalem or his head, as the case may be, on the performance of his oath. Our Lord, accordingly, prohibits those oaths on the ground that the swearer has no power over Jerusalem or over his head, and no right to dispose of them. Jerusalem "is the city of the great king," and what right has one of his subjects to give it, as it were, in pledge? And how can the swearer pretend to dispose of his head, when he has not so much power over it that he can by his fiat make one of the hairs with which it is covered "white or black." This want of power proclaims a want of right of disposal. To heaven and earth, on the other hand, the reference, whatever its precise nature may be, must be different. It cannot well involve the idea of disposing of them. They must be viewed rather as dealing with the swearer than as dealt with, in punishment of his perjury if he should forswear himself. That it is in such a light they are contemplated seems to be implied in the ground on which swearing by them is prohibited—the ground, namely, that they are closely associated with the regal majesty and power of God, the one being "his throne," the other "his footstool," and that he, therefore, who invokes them to vindicate truth, invokes not them, but God viewed as a mighty king. The oaths under consideration proceed upon the recognition of a power that can and that will punish perjury; and what imparts to them their distinctive character is, that the swearer appeals to that power. Of the appeal thus made Christ unfolds the real significance, representing it as an appeal, not as he who makes it may blindly imagine, to heaven or to the earth, but to the Supreme Ruler. In what he thus gives as its full developement, we see its original character as an appeal to a source of power to punish.

If those observations be well-founded, they bring into view another classification of oaths—oaths in which a power

is invoked to punish perjury, and oaths in which a particular judgment in punishment of it is imprecated ; and, apart from the interpretation of our passage, we know that the oaths of ordinary intercourse admit of this classification.

We here see the ground of our Lord's prohibition of swearing. When an oath is made by invocation, though it be a creature that is invoked in terms, still, if the oath be not idolatrous, it is God that is really invoked. Hence the use of oaths so made, in the ordinary intercourse of life, involves great irreverence towards God ; and that use of them is, therefore, forbidden. Oaths of specific imprecation, again, from their very nature, are unlawful under all circumstances.

God is viewed in the light of his dealings with the human family, when here and elsewhere heaven is called "his throne," the earth "his footstool" (Isa. lxvi. 1), and Jerusalem his capital.—(Ps. xlviii. 2.) Viewed apart from his rational creatures, he does not sustain local relations, but to his dealings with his rational creatures such relations necessarily attach. Thus the administration of his moral government, in its general bearing upon our race, places heaven and earth respectively in certain relations to him ; and in one point of view heaven is his throne and the earth his footstool. And his maintenance of the character of the king and deliverer of his people brought Jerusalem into such a relation to him under the Mosaic dispensation, that it might be regarded as his capital.

The view which our passage has spontaneously yielded to us, for we have not subjected it to any coercion from without,\* —the view that the prohibition, "Swear not at all," applies

\* It has, however, been often subjected to such coercion. Not a few interpreters, perceiving, from the teaching of other passages, that "Swear not at all" could not be taken as an absolute prohibition of swearing in all cases, have in various ways violently forced upon the language of the prohibition a restricted signification. "Swear not at all" means, according to one, *Swear not falsely*, and, according to another, *Swear not such oaths as are hostile to the reverence that is due to God*. This latter is Tho-

to men's "communication" with each other in the ordinary intercourse of life,—is confirmed, and, indeed, we conceive conclusively established, by the fact that beyond the sphere of ordinary intercourse swearing is not prohibited. There are two distinct occasions, or classes of occasions, on which it is evident from Scripture, and, we apprehend, also from the nature of the case, an oath may be taken. In the first place, we have the most conclusive evidence that an oath may be taken when it is imposed by competent authority. Our Lord himself, whose example affords infallible guidance, took an oath under such circumstances. The high priest administered the oath—"I adjure thee by the living God, that thou tell us whether thou be the Christ the Son of God"—and the Saviour took it in the usual form—"Thou hast said."—(Matt. xxvi. 63, 64.) And, in the second place, we have conclusive evidence that an oath may be taken when, in cases involving important interests, it is imperatively demanded, for the maintenance of truth, by the circumstances in which we are placed by divine providence. The history of the apostle Paul, often placed in urgent circumstances, and always deeply earnest in dealing with the circumstances in which he was placed, furnishes several instances. One occurs in his vindication of his apostolical authority, in the Epistle to the Galatians—"Behold, before God, I lie not."—(Gal. i. 20.) His defence of his conduct in not visiting the Church in Corinth, as he "had been minded," and in accordance with the intimation which it would appear he had sent to it, furnishes luck's interpretation. But if "Swear not at all"—deliberately chosen, explicit, and emphatic as the language is—does not mean, *Swear not at all*, but *Swear not irreverently*, all confidence in language must be abandoned, and interpreters themselves cannot expect to use it intelligibly. The reasoning by which it is attempted to establish such a meaning must, from the nature of the case, be inconclusive; but if the reader analyse it, he will find it to be more faulty than he could well anticipate. Interpreters of this class display great learning and research in adducing facts philological and historical, but their reasoning from the facts they adduce is often most wretched.

another instance—"I call God for a record upon my soul, that to spare you I came not as yet unto Corinth."—(2 Cor. i. 23, and also ver. 18.) Such use of swearing among men God distinctly sanctions by adopting it himself in his dealings with them (Isa. lxxv. 23; Gen. xxii. 16, 17; Heb. vi. 13, 14); for, in confirming his own declarations by an oath, in wonderful condescension to human conceptions and associations, he fully and unequivocally recognises that an oath, in circumstances calling for it, is a legitimate, as it is the most solemn, mode of confirmation. The apostle distinctly intimates that the oath of God is an assumption, into the sphere of God's dealings with men, of a certain use which men make of oaths in their dealings with each other; and such an assumption of it is the Lawgiver's own most emphatic testimony to its entire accordance with the requirements of righteousness.—(Heb. vi. 16, 17.)

An oath consists in solemnly declaring that we remit to the judgment of God the statement to which it is attached. Now, it is our duty to maintain an habitual reference to the judgment of God; and, evidently, there is nothing wrong or improper in *solemnly* declaring that in a given case we speak under the influence of such a reference. Accordingly, we find such a declaration commanded in certain cases.—(Exod. xxii. 11.) What is to be condemned is the want of solemnity in this declaration, and it cannot be solemn if made upon an ordinary or a trivial occasion.

It is true that the necessity for the use of formal oaths arises from the prevalence of untruthfulness among men. But if untruthfulness were to cease, the result would be, not so much the discontinuance, as, in a sense, the universality of swearing. In all they said men should then speak as if on oath, virtually remitting every word they uttered to the judgment of God.

VER. 37.—*But let your communication be Yea, yea; Nay, nay.*—"Your communication," your speech in your intercourse with each other.

Our Lord here directs and requires that, instead of using oaths, men confine themselves in their "communication" to simple statement, affirming what they have to affirm, and denying what they have to deny. The intention of the repetition of "Yea" and "Nay" may be to indicate the application of the rule to all the successive statements of our "communication," requiring that it consist throughout of simple affirmations and denials. It cannot well be the object of the repetition to intimate that our statements are to be emphatic and animated, for often, if they bore such a character, they should not be appropriate to the occasions on which they were made.

Neither the phraseology nor the connection will admit the interpretation, "Let it be the character of your communication that you shall affirm what is true, and deny what is not true" (*Wolf*); or, as it has been expressed, "Let the yea of fact be the yea of statement, and the nay of fact be the nay of statement" (*Bengel*). What the connection requires is not an injunction to speak the truth, but an injunction to employ only simple statements, abstaining from confirmatory oaths; and it is such an injunction that the phraseology conveys. This is also the import of the similar injunction appended to a prohibition of swearing in the Epistle of James: "Let your yea be yea, and your nay, nay."—(James v. 12.) The obvious meaning of this language is, "Let your affirmation be a simple affirmation, and your denial a simple denial; use no oaths for confirmation."

*For whatsoever is more than these cometh of evil.*—This is an enforcement of the preceding injunction. In our communication all beyond simple affirmation and simple denial springs from evil, results from the operation of *the* radical and originating *evil*. Here, in illustrating and enforcing the prohibition of swearing, as, in the preceding context, in illustrating and enforcing the prohibition of murder and the prohibition of adultery, our Lord descends to the first devia-

tion towards the specified goal of transgression, and requires that that deviation do not take place. The rule he prescribes is, "*obsta principiis.*"

"Evil," or *the evil*, evidently denotes here the source of actual sin, the antecedent "evil" from which our sinful activity emanates. Now, this antecedent evil must comprehend all that, from its morally evil nature and in point of fact, is directly operative or exerts a direct efficiency in producing the sinful activity of human conduct. It is distinctly presented in this light in our text. Guided by the character which, viewed in itself, it thus bears, and by the relation in which it thus stands to outward sinful activity, we recognise it as the combination of indwelling sin in man, and of the corresponding principle in Satan disposing and moving him to labour strenuously and incessantly to promote the power and the prevalence of sin.—(Rom. vii. 5, 8, 17–24; Eph. ii. 1, 2.) Taking this view of the meaning, we regard the word rendered "evil" as neuter. Regarded as masculine, and rendered *the evil one*, it would not exhibit in its whole extent "the evil" from which outward sinful activity springs.

VER. 38.—*An eye for an eye, a tooth for a tooth.*—(See Part III., sect. i., par. 12, 13, and the Scripture passages there referred to.)—As regards the construction, the two accusatives denote, in Exod. xxi. 24, objects of "shalt give" in the preceding verse; but there is no action expressed of which they denote objects in Lev. xxiv. 20, or in Deut. xix. 21. Verbal action is, however, implied, and the proper case for expressing its object is therefore employed. At first the action intended would be distinctly expressed, as it is in Exod. xxi. 23, but in course of time, to secure the brevity always consulted in frequently-repeated sayings, the verb would be dropped, the expression of the object remaining unchanged. It is in this form the saying occurs in our text.

VER. 39.—*But I say unto you, that ye resist not evil.*—The

direction, “An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth,” given to magistrates with respect to the punishment of injuries, was transferred or extended by the scribes and Pharisees to the sphere of private life. By this transference or extension its spirit and design were entirely changed, and, instead of operating as a prohibition of unbrotherly conduct towards one’s fellows by requiring the punishment of injuries, it authorised such conduct in the form of retaliation or the returning of evil for evil.

It is to the retaliation thus authorised that our Lord opposes himself in the passage upon which we are now entering. Guided by what is thus the scope and bearing of the passage, we at once understand “That ye resist not evil” as prohibiting the resisting of evil in a vindictive retaliating spirit. It is wholly as a manifestation of this spirit that the resisting is to be viewed. And it is to be observed that it is not retaliation in its consummated form merely that is prohibited, but the very first step on the path of retaliation—the resisting of evil—the incipient efforts against it, which, if successful, would be followed by retaliation, properly so called. From the fact that it is against those incipient efforts that the prohibition is expressly directed, some have failed to perceive its reference to retaliation, and have consequently regarded it as a prohibition of resistance, as such. There are two elements that enter into the meaning of our passage and compose it; one supplied by the scope, and the other by the words. It was only the latter of these that the interpreters to whom we now advert recognised, and hence the acts expressed by the words were to them bare acts, and not embodiments of a certain spirit.

“The evil” we regard as identical with “the evil” in ver. 37. Here, however, it is not distinguished, as it is there, from the acts which it originates, but is viewed as presented and embodied in them.

*Whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, &c.*—The ques-

tion is, May recourse be had to retaliation ? and our Lord here puts an extreme case, and distinctly requires that even in such a case, and therefore in every case, the utmost distance from retaliation be maintained—that, rather than retaliate or make any approach to retaliation, we expose ourselves to a repetition of the insult or the injury we have already received. This is the force of the injunction, “Turn to him the other also.” The act specified is enjoined, not as a bodily act to be mechanically performed in the circumstances indicated, but on the supposition that we must perform it to avoid retaliation. Accordingly, it is not enjoined at all any further than this supposition is realised.

“Right cheek.” The right hand being used in striking, it might be expected that the left cheek would be first struck; and it has been supposed that here the “right cheek” is first mentioned simply because this is the order observed in speaking of the right and left. Perhaps the person striking is viewed as striking from behind; and then the person struck, rather than turn round to retaliate, is to turn round and offer his other cheek to his assailant.

VER. 40.—*If any man will sue thee at the law, &c.*—The case put must be one of wrong, for otherwise there would be no room for retaliation; and the wrong supposed is, that some one unrighteously lays claims to your coat, and intends to take the law of you with the view of enforcing his claim. Conduct so iniquitous and disgraceful would be peculiarly calculated to provoke retaliation; but our Lord requires that, rather than retaliate or repel the unjust demand in a vindictive, retaliating spirit, you not only at once give your coat to the unrighteous claimant, but “let him have your cloak also.” He does not *absolutely* require that you pursue this course; he only requires that you pursue it rather than act on the traditional maxim of “an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.” What you have to do is to avoid retaliation, and if, for the purpose of avoiding it, you must part with

your coat, then by all means part with it, and with your cloak also if that be necessary.

The “coat” or tunic was an inner garment made of cotton or linen, and the “cloak” was a loose outer garment, and, as being larger and often of more costly materials, was of greater value than the tunic.

In Luke (vi. 29) the case supposed is, that one “takes away your cloak.” It appears, therefore, that our Lord put this case also, as well as the one stated by Matthew. Accordingly, by combining the two reports, we shall obtain a fuller view of this portion of the sermon than is given by either evangelist. The passage seems to have formed originally an alternate parallelism :—

- A. | If any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat,
- B. | Let him have thy cloak also ;
- A. | And him that taketh away thy cloak,
- B. | Forbid not to take thy coat also.

Of this parallelism Matthew reports the first two, and Luke the last two members. Each of them presents the lesson taught, though not the whole of the illustration employed in conveying it.

A gradation is observable in the parallelism, such as we often find in passages similarly arranged. In the first two members we have an unrighteous claim preferred, and a law-suit threatened to enforce it ; but in the last two the very forms of justice are cast aside, and recourse is had to open violence. Again, in the first two members the *coat* only is coveted, but in the last two the *cloak*, the more valuable garment, is seized.

VER. 41.—*Whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile.*—The person contemplated as compelling you to accompany him one mile is supposed to need your assistance on his journey ; and what our Lord requires is, that you shall not suffer his injurious treatment of you to embitter your feelings towards him, but shall be as ready, as if you had experienced no such

treatment at his hands, to give him your assistance for another mile. Thus the force of the injunction is, "Let not his injurious treatment of you prevent you from dealing mercifully with him; do not retaliate by withholding from him a service which he needs, and which you are able to render."

The same transition is, we think, observable here, which we remarked in the first member of the sermon, from meekness to mercifulness.—(See Part I., sect. i., par. 6, 7.) In opposition to the doctrine of retaliation taught by the scribes and Pharisees, our Lord first requires the maintenance of a meek deportment under injurious treatment—"Whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also" (Ver. 39); and then, in our text, the exercise of mercy towards those from whom such treatment is received—"Whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain."—(Ver. 41.) This transition may, perhaps, be detected in the injunction of ver. 40—"If any man will sue thee at the law, and take away thy coat, let him have thy cloak also." The supposition may be implied that he needs the "cloak;" and then the force of the requirement is, "Though he is unjust, be thou merciful." In ver. 42 the requirement of mercy becomes quite explicit.

VER. 42.—*Give to him that asketh thee.*—We are still to retain the ideas contributed, so to speak, by the scope of the passage—the ideas of injurious treatment received and retaliation provoked—and, accordingly, the requirement here is, that if one who has given you injurious treatment applies to you for relief, you mercifully bestow it, dealing with his case as you would with any other case of distress, and thus preserving to the rule applicable to such cases its benignant universality—"Give to him that asketh thee."

*From him that would borrow of thee turn not thou away.*—This injunction seems to apply to a case in which still greater provocation has been received than is contemplated in the preceding injunction. It is here required that mercy be ex-

exercised towards one whom conscious guilt will not permit to expect a gift, and will scarcely permit to ask a loan. This view of his position seems to be conveyed by the description given of him as one “that *would* borrow;” and the command that you do “not turn away from him” presents him in quite as unfavourable a light, for it clearly implies that his conduct towards you deserves, if vengeance were yours, that as, self-condemned and hesitating, he approaches to prefer his request, you should turn from him with indignation, if not with disgust.

The requirement that a merciful reception be given to such an applicant carries us to the very confines of the love that anticipates application. Accordingly, in the passage which now immediately follows, our Lord proceeds to enjoin the exercise of that love.

The universality of the injunctions which our Lord opposes to the traditional doctrine of retaliation, should occasion no difficulty. They proceed upon the supposition that the service enjoined is one that you would deem it your duty and would be disposed to render, if the person who stands in need of it had not given you injurious treatment; and all that they exact from you is that you render it equally as the case stands, the injurious treatment notwithstanding. The object of them is to prevent injurious treatment received from affecting in any way the procedure adopted towards the author of it.

VER. 43.—*Thou shalt love thy neighbour.*—(See Part III., sect. i., par. 14, 15.)—This precept occurs in Lev. xix. 18. Here however it is, in the first place, somewhat enfeebled, or, at least, rendered less specific, by the omission of the statement of the degree of love to be cherished—“as thyself.” And then, further, as is evident, both from the addition, “and hate thine enemy,” and from the bearing of our Lord’s corrective teaching, the application of it is restricted to “neighbours” in the sense of friends.

Of course, a friend may be a neighbour, and all neighbours should be, and many neighbours are friends; hence the term *neighbour* is often applied to a friend, and naturally suggests or conveys indirectly the idea of friendship. It does not, however, by its own proper force *denote*, and, therefore, it does not at all denote a *friend*. When it presents *distinctively*, if it ever does so, the idea of a friend, it must present it in virtue of an accession of significancy which it receives from the scope and context. There is, perhaps, no instance in which the idea of *friend* seems more decidedly to take the place of that of mere neighbour than in Prov. xvii. 17; even, there, however, the idea of neighbour is the one really presented. It is not the object of the wise man to state it as a fact, that every one to whom the designation in question is applied "loveth at all times;" what he intends is to define the true import of that designation, as properly applicable to him only who thus cherishes a perennial love. The force of his language accordingly is, If you would know a true neighbour, he is one who "loveth at all times." If it were necessary to substitute the idea of *friend* for that of *neighbour*, because neighbours do not always love one another, it would be equally necessary to change "brother" into *affectionate* or *dutiful brother*, for too often *brothers* cause or aggravate adversity, instead of relieving it.

The principle that the modified meaning which a word may bear under the influence, or, so to speak, with the assistance of a particular context, may be borne by it irrespectively of context, has wrought great confusion in lexicography and interpretation, and should be resolutely disallowed.

The term under consideration denotes a fellow-man, viewed as within our sphere, whether by vicinity or from being presented to our notice and accessible to our influence.

*And hate thine enemy.*—The scribes and Pharisees passed this addition as the implicate of the injunction, "Thou shalt love thy neighbour;" and, of course, an injunction which

implies that you are to “hate your enemies” must restrict the exercise of love to your friends.

VER. 44.—*Love your enemies*.—This verse consists of four members which form an alternate parallelism :

A. Love your enemies,

B. Bless them that curse you,

A. Do good to them that hate you, and

B. Pray for them that despitefully use you and persecute you.

In this parallelism *A.* corresponds to *A.*, and *B.* to *B.* In *A.* and *A.* those with whom you have to deal are described by their *disposition* towards you—they are “your enemies” and “hate you.” In *B.* and *B.*, again, they are described by their *conduct* towards you—they “curse you” and “despitefully use you and persecute you.” And while their disposition and conduct towards you are such, you are required in *A.* and *A.* to cherish *benevolent feelings* and perform *beneficent deeds* towards them, and in *B.* and *B.* to *pronounce* and to *supplicate a blessing* upon them. There is also a striking gradation in the meaning. As regards the disposition towards you of those with whom you have here to deal, they are first described generally, in *A.*, by the *hostility* with which they regard you ; and then, in *B.*, their hostility appears under the more decided and specific form of hatred. Again, the hostility in *A.* takes effect in the cursing in *B.* ; and the hatred in *A.* in the spiteful treatment and the persecution in *B.* It is not, however, such a gradation that is to be looked for in the prescribed procedure towards them, but adaptation to the successive attitudes in which they appear, and such adaptation we find in it. In *A.* and *B.* this adaptation is obvious ; but it might be supposed that in *A.* love would be required as the proper contrast to hatred. What is required, however, in each case is a procedure the opposite of the retaliation provoked. Feelings of hostility, when known to exist, provoke feelings of hostility in retaliation ; and our Lord requires that you do not cherish such feelings, but, on the

contrary, love your enemies. But, when feelings of hostility assume the more decided and active form of hatred, they are ripe for passing any moment into hostile deeds, and accordingly provoke to retaliation in the form of such deeds; hence our Lord requires that, instead of yielding to this provocation, you do good to those who hate you. Those who persecute you, leave in your power no means of benefiting them but prayer, and our Lord requires that you use this only remaining means.

- Luke arranges the clauses of our passage in a different order, but in an order quite in harmony with the order in which they are presented by Matthew, for he simply brings the corresponding members into juxtaposition, so that *A.* is immediately followed by *A.*, and *B.* by *B.* While we are inclined to think that Matthew has preserved the original structure of the passage, we hold Luke's report to be equally faithful; for the latter evangelist merely resolves the parallelism and adopts a more simple arrangement, which better suited the brevity of his report.\*

Some critics would mutilate our passage by rejecting from the text the second and the third member. The internal evidence against this rejection, furnished by the structure of the passage, is very strong, and the external evidence in support of it is at the same time insufficient.

The love to enemies which our Lord enjoins is a love of benevolence, and does not at all imply approval of their character. In requiring that your feelings and conduct towards them be the opposite of theirs towards you, our Lord very clearly intimates that, while you love them, that is, with a love of benevolence, you should regard their character with strong disapprobation. He that loves his enemies must have

\* Bengel, though not in possession of the doctrine of structural parallelism, discovered an alternate parallelism in our passage. "The first member," he remarks, "almost contains the third, and the fourth the second."

such views of love, and be so affected towards it, that he cannot but wholly disapprove of their unloving spirit.

*Despitefully use.*—First there is cursing, and then this more advanced manifestation of the same spirit—despiteful usage and persecution.

The verb employed cannot well be taken here in the sense of *traduce, accuse falsely* (1 Pet. iii. 16), for *traducing* would rather be a descent from “cursing” than in advance of it, and could not, therefore, form a higher member in the ascending series of our text. The “speaking of all manner of evil falsely” against the persecuted is, indeed, associated with persecution in ver. 11; but there the stage previously reached, that of “reviling,” is much lower than the stage previously reached here, that of “cursing.” If the idea of *traducing* were to be at all adopted here, it would be necessary to view the traducing and the persecution as forming but one manifestation of the unbrotherly spirit, for the gradation which doubtless obtains in the passage would otherwise be disturbed. But, then, we should expect that, according to the order of ver. 11, the *traducing* would follow the persecution as a justification of it, and not precede it, when already there has been “cursing.”

VER. 45.—*That ye may be the children of your Father which is in heaven.*—(See on ver. 9, p. 65.)—Believers are the sons of God, as, in virtue of adoption, standing in a filial relation to him. Accordingly, they do not become his sons in this sense by pursuing the course here enjoined. It is evident from the designation here applied to him—their Father—that in this sense they are already his sons. But those who are the sons of God in respect of relation to him should be his sons also in respect of character, or by bearing his image, and particularly by bearing it as regards the exercise of love.—(Eph. iv. 32, v. 1.) The end proposed to those here addressed is, that they may be the sons of God in this latter sense—his sons in respect of character—“blameless

and harmless, without rebuke.”—(Phil. ii. 15.) They are to act in the manner enjoined, that they may sustain the distinctive character and fulfil the high office of the sons of God.—(See on ver. 9, p. 66.)

*For he maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good.*—Without pursuing the course prescribed, they cannot bear the character and act the part of the children of God, “for,” &c. As our Lord’s object here is to engage his people to be “followers of God as dear children,” by “loving their enemies,” &c., he gives special prominence to God’s benevolent procedure towards his enemies. For this purpose he employs an expedient, so to speak, of which such use is frequently made in Scripture (see “Jebb’s Sacred Literature”),—the expedient of presenting the particular, to which attention is specially called, in the extreme members of an introverted parallelism. The parallelism here is :—

|    |                           |
|----|---------------------------|
|    | He maketh his sun to rise |
| A. | On the evil, and          |
|    | B.   On the good ;        |
|    | And sendeth rain          |
|    | B   On the just, and      |
| A. | On the unjust.            |

Here, in the enumeration of those with whom God deals in the benevolent and bountiful manner described, his enemies—“the evil” and “the unjust”—are placed in the extreme members, that the fact of his so dealing with *them*, being first and last presented, might be specially impressed upon the mind. Attention is thus more effectually directed to that fact than if it were stated alone, while, further, the introduction of “the good” and “the just” serves to indicate the high degree of benevolence and bountifulness that distinguishes his procedure towards “the evil” and “the unjust.”

Here, again, the character of Luke’s report is in keeping with its brevity. This evangelist retains only the extreme members of our parallelism—“he is kind to the unthankful and the evil ;” his retention of these, while he omits the

two central members, affording a distinct corroboration of the view which we have given of the significance of their position. We remarked in the Introduction, sect. iii., par. 14, that Luke introduces, in continuous connection, what forms the *resumption* of the discrimination of righteousness in Matthew's arrangement; and this peculiarity of structure may serve, or at least contribute, to account for all that distinguishes his report as regards either the succession of topics or the phraseology. In the passage with which at present we are immediately concerned, he has "unthankful" as the parallel to "unjust" in Matthew's report; and the latter term standing in the first part of a parallelism, the former might very well stand as the corresponding term in the *resumption*, or the second part. Ingratitude partakes of the nature of injustice, and he that is "unjust" will also, if visited with benefits, prove "unthankful." Thus, in regard both to correspondence and gradation in meaning, "unthankful" forms a most appropriate parallel to "unjust."

*He maketh his sun to rise.*—"Every good gift and every perfect gift"—every thing that is in its nature advantageous—"is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights."—(James i. 17). And whatsoever gift cometh down from him does so not merely under the operation of an established law or arrangement, but in virtue of a specific, deliberate bestowal. The benefits received may result from the operation of a general law, but still, and none the less on this account, there is, as regards each of them, a deliberate bestowal of it by God on the person by whom it is received. Thus, though the sun rises in obedience to an established law, still, God, dealing deliberately in the matter and at the time with every individual upon whom it rises, "maketh it to rise" upon every such individual. The fact that a general law operates in a given case, instead of furnishing ground for the inference that God does not act directly in that case, rather results from the uniformity with which he acts in it.

The sun is God's, and hence its light and heat are his gift at the time to every individual who is visited with them—a gift which proceeds from and manifests his goodness towards every such individual.

The rising of the sun has so general a bearing, that it might be thought God could not be regarded as dealing by means of its rising with any person or class of persons in particular; our Lord, however, as we have seen, teaches us to entertain a very different view. The falling of rain, again, presents an appearance of so much irregularity and fortuitousness, that men are ready to regard it as indeed fortuitous; but here also our Lord teaches us to recognise the same particular *individualising* divine providence. It is God that “sendeth rain,” and he sends it in the exercise of goodness towards each individual on whom he sends it.

Luke does not adduce the illustrations of the divine kindness that are given in Matthew's report; his plan demanding greater brevity, he simply states the truth which these illustrations exhibit—“He is kind,” (vi. 35.)

VER. 46, 47.—*For if ye love them which love you,*” &c.—Our Lord had just directed those whom he addresses to love even their enemies, and, whatever provocation they might receive to pursue a different course, to deal with them in accordance with the promptings and requirements of love, that thus they might be the children of God. And here he further enforces the direction by referring it to themselves if any other course would conduct to this glorious issue. There were only three courses they could pursue with respect to the exercise of love:—to love all men, not excepting even their enemies, or to love their friends only, or to hate all men. It was evident that they could not attain to the high distinction and privileges of the children of God by pursuing this last course. But neither could they attain to them by pursuing the second. On this point he appeals to themselves—“If ye love them that love you, what reward have ye? do not

even the publicans the same ?” Thus the force of “for” is, “Love your enemies,” &c., that ye may be the children of God, “for,” if ye pursue any other course, ye shall not attain to this distinction and the advantages attached to it.

The traditional dictum, “Thou shalt love thy neighbour, and hate thine enemy,” (ver. 43) requires only that “you love them which love you,”—that the second of the courses just specified be pursued. And our Lord puts it to his hearers if to such an exercise of love any “reward” can be attached. It must, if a reward is attached to it, confer favourable distinction, for the idea of reward comprehends in it the approving recognition of somewhat that confers such distinction.—(See Part. II., sect. i., par. 3, 4.) Our Lord, therefore, further puts it to his hearers if such an exercise of love does confer favourable distinction. This is clearly the force of the question, “Do not even the publicans the same ?” They could not deny that even the publicans, to whom in their estimate of character they assigned the lowest place, loved those who loved them ; and they would not maintain that to do what the publicans did conferred honourable distinction.

The question, “What reward have ye ?” proceeds upon the fact that, in a certain sense, those whom a reward awaits “have” that reward now (ver. 12).—(See Part I., sect. ii., par. 4–6.)

The word rendered here “publicans” denoted primarily those who farmed the public revenues. Under these were the collectors, who either were employed by them as their agents or paid to them a rent for the taxes and customs of particular localities. Persons occupying this latter position, to whom also the term under consideration was applied, were exposed to odium from the very nature of their office. Such imposts as they collected would often be paid with a grudge, and the collectors regarded as at least accomplices in the exaction of them. The office was peculiarly offensive

to the Jews at the time of our Lord's ministry, when they were under a foreign and heathen yoke ; and to all else that contributed to render it offensive there was added gross and very prevalent extortion. An office thus degraded would seldom be sought by any but the base and worthless ; it repelled others, and it made the worthless worse. Accordingly, of the character of collecting publicans, as a body, the very lowest estimate was not unjustly formed (Matt. xxi. 32 ; ix. 10, 11 ; xviii. 17) ; and it is this class of publicans that are intended in our text.

Viewed in the light of the character thus borne by the publicans, our Lord's question, "Do not the publicans the same?" is peculiarly forcible. He recognises in this question the justness, at least, on the whole, of the estimate formed of their character ; but he converts that estimate into a means of humbling the pride of self-righteousness which, in the hands of those with whom he is now dealing, it served to foster.

Here again, in Luke's abstract of the sermon (vi. 32), we have, instead of the illustration, a statement of the general fact illustrated—"Sinners also love those that love them."

*Salute.*—This instance seems to have been chosen to indicate the contracted limits within which the exercise of love was reduced in the Pharisaical code. The force of our Lord's language is, let it be granted that "you salute your brethren,"—that your love achieves so much ; still, what distinction does this achievement confer upon you, for must you not admit that the very heathen \* do as much ? It is not at all implied that, if they saluted their enemies also, this more enlarged exercise of love would confer upon them the necessary distinction. Our Lord does not intimate what would confer this distinction ; he simply puts it to them, if what *they* exacted from themselves would confer it. We do

\* Some read *the heathen* here, and probably this reading is to be preferred.

not, therefore, concur with the expositors who deem it necessary so to elevate the manifestation of love denoted by the verb here rendered *salute*, that, if it only extended to enemies, it would be distinctive of the subjects of Christ's kingdom, and who, for this purpose, render that verb, *treat with affection*. Our Lord's direction in ver. 44 consists, as we have seen, of two branches,—“Love your enemies,” and “Bless them that curse you,”—alternately resumed in what immediately follows; and, after enforcing this direction in ver. 45, he proceeds to contrast the requirement of tradition with the first branch of it in ver. 46, and with the second branch of it in our text. Now, it is *saluting* one's brethren, and not an affectionate treatment of them, that forms a contrast to *blessing* those that curse one. Bengel, guided by his fine perception of the meaning and his confiding submission to the language of Scripture, observed the correspondence just traced, and, to account for the substitution of “salute” in our text for “bless” in the second branch of the direction in ver. 44, remarks that “the heathen” (for he adopts that reading) “do not bless and pray.” We adhere, however, to the account formerly given of this substitution. It was doubtless in what the scribes and Pharisees *taught*, and not in what the heathen *did*, that our Lord sought a contrast to what he himself enjoined.

*Brethren*.—Those whom they acknowledged as such.

*More than others*.—Of distinguished or surpassing excellence, that rises above the level of prevailing character.

Ver. 48.—*Be ye therefore perfect*.—(See Part. III., sect. ii., par. 1.)—Our Lord here resumes and reiterates the injunction of ver. 44; now, however, he drops detail and all direct reference to others, and gives the injunction in its absolute form—“Be ye perfect.” The adequate exercise of love, involving as it does the adequate exercise of all other legitimate affections, and therefore infallibly securing right practice, is the perfection both of the divine and of human

character. In the divine character this perfection has been from eternity realised, and is presented to us as the standard of excellence to which our character is to be conformed; and the requirement of our text is, that our character be conformed to it—"Be ye perfect, even as your Father in heaven is perfect." In the divine character the perfection intended is found distinguished by all that is necessary to harmonise it with the divine nature; and what is required is, that it be found also in the character of men distinguished by all that is necessary to harmonise it with human nature. This perfection cannot be realised in the character of men exactly as it appears in the character of God; and what is required is, that it be realised in their character, in accordance with the conditions of their own nature. Thus it is the *kind* of perfection required that "as" indicates. Perfection being required—that is, the proper perfection of human nature—there is no room for any further intimation of degree.

The requirement of our text is restricted by the context to moral perfection. Perfection that is enjoined must necessarily be moral perfection—perfection of which law takes cognisance.

*Be ye.*—Literally, *ye shall be*, uttered imperatively.

Here, again, we find in Luke (vi. 36) a diversity quite in accordance with the brevity of his report. The scribes and Pharisees required only the exercise of love towards friends, but our Lord requires the exercise of it towards enemies also, and that, in this full exercise of it, human character rise to its proper perfection. This, as we have seen, is the force of the injunction, "Be ye perfect." But love exercised towards enemies is mercy, and, accordingly, "Be ye merciful" is a requirement of the full exercise of love, and is thus equivalent to "Be ye perfect" in our text.

*Therefore.*—Inasmuch as the rival course prescribed by tradition will not conduct to the issue you ought to seek—the only desirable issue.

We shall present at one view the structure of the paragraph, ver. 43-48, as it has been developed in our exposition:—

- A. | Ye have heard, &c. But I say unto you, Love your enemies,  
&c.—43, 44.
- B. | That ye may be the children of your Father which is in  
heaven, &c.—45.
- B. | For if ye love them which love you, what reward have ye?  
&c.—46, 47.
- A. | Be ye therefore perfect, as your Father which is in heaven is  
perfect.—48.

In this parallelism *A.* corresponds to *A.*, and *B.* to *B.* In *A.* and *A.* our Lord enjoins, in *B.* and *B.* he enforces the injunction. In the injunction in *A.* he rejects one course and prescribes another, and in *B.* he enforces the injunction by the consideration of the issue to which the prescribed course conducts. In *B.* he urges, in further enforcement of the injunction, the counterpart consideration that the rejected course will not conduct to the desired issue; and then in *A.* reiterates the injunction in the form of a deduction from this consideration, or rather from the twofold consideration of which it forms a part,—the consideration that the prescribed course conducts, and that the rejected course does not conduct, to the desired issue.

From the instance now before us we might illustrate the *rationale* of this form of parallelism. We shall only remark, however, that the introverted structure of our passage gives to the enforcement a double action or power, as is evident from the double relation in which it stands to the injunction. First, the enforcement in *B.* is connected with the injunction in *A.* by “That;” and, then, the injunction in *A.* is connected with the enforcement in *B.* by “Therefore.”

VI., 1.—*Take heed that you do not your alms before men.*—(See Part III., sect. ii., par. 1-5.)—Our Lord here proceeds to discriminate righteousness as regards the performance of positive duty; and if, instead of *alms*, we read *righteousness*—

a reading very generally preferred—he begins with a general warning against “doing our righteousness” under the influence of an undue regard to men. It might be expected, however, that a general warning issued by our Lord, as he was proceeding to expose corrupt motives, instead of being confined to one of the motives exposed, would extend to both,—for it is two that he exposes,—especially as he does not introduce, in ver. 19, his exposure of the second of them with a similar warning.

Besides, the expression, “Ye do your righteousness,” does not seem admissible. “Your righteousness” means *the righteousness realised in your character*, and we cannot speak of *doing* righteousness thus viewed. It is righteousness as it is realised in conduct, or as it consists in conduct conformed to the law, that is *done*; but righteousness in this sense is not, and from its nature cannot well be, ascribed to those by whom it is done by possessive pronouns such as “your.” For example, when I am called upon to give evidence, telling the truth in the proper spirit and from proper motives is the righteousness I have to do in this case; but, then, it is not *my* righteousness any more than the truth I have to tell is *my* truth; it is not righteousness “fulfilled in” me, and therefore *mine*, but righteousness prescribed to me that I may do it. Tholuck’s answer is altogether unsatisfactory—that the righteousness intended “may be that sort of righteousness to be performed peculiarly by the disciples of the Lord.” The Scriptures know nothing of different sorts of righteousness, one sort to be performed by believers and another by others; they recognise only one righteousness, which all are required to perform. In v. 20, “Your righteousness” means, not a peculiar righteousness to be performed by those addressed, but the righteousness realised in their character.

The phraseology under consideration seems to be open also to a further objection. The term “righteousness”

describes the mode of acting to which it is applied—applied by Christ as his own designation for it—as righteous not only in external form, but throughout, and thus it ever holds that “he that doeth righteousness is righteous” (1 John iii. 7); we apprehend, therefore, that a warning against doing righteousness from a corrupt motive would involve a contradiction.

While there is thus strong internal evidence against *δικαιοσύνη*—*righteousness*—there is a preponderance of external authority in favour of the reading of the received text. To that reading we therefore adhere.

*Take heed.*—The verb in this sense, when the construction is fully developed, is followed by the dative of the proper reciprocal pronoun (Luke xvii. 3); but here, and again in vii. 15, towards the end of the sermon, it is used without this express indication of the reference of its action.

In doing alms there is, from the nature of the case, great temptation to ostentation—great temptation to do them from a desire to be seen and admired by men, and not from right motives; and hence the warning of our text.

*To be seen.*—The idea is, as we have already intimated, to be seen with interest or admiration—to become in this sense a *spectacle*.

A desire to be seen by man, to be an object of attention to him, to gain his favour or his praise—in a word, an undue regard to man—is the corrupt motive which our Lord exposes in this member of the sermon, 1–18.—(See Part III., sect. ii.)

*Otherwise ye have no reward of your Father, &c.*—If, however, ye do not take heed as directed, but in your alms-deeds seek the reward of glory from men, ye forfeit all reward from your Father which is in heaven. Those addressed are regarded as believers, as is evident from the fact that God is viewed as their Father, and that they themselves are contemplated as in a position to do their alms

acceptably. Accordingly, believers are here taught that it is necessary for them to exercise great and unceasing watchfulness, keeping their hearts with all diligence, that they may not fall under the influence of an undue regard to man, and thus, notwithstanding they are believers, forfeit so far the advantage with which, by the gracious appointment of God, a godly procedure is attended. Though the believer, having been made accepted in the Beloved, is an heir of God, and shall not come into condemnation (John v. 24), his character and actions have not been withdrawn from judicial cognisance. "God will render to every man according to his deeds" (Rom. ii. 6), to believers (ver. 10), and to unbelievers (ver. 8, 9.) \*

VER. 2.—*Therefore when thou doest thine alms.*—The object of our Lord in this part of the discourse is, not to enjoin the practice, but to discriminate the character of righteousness; he therefore says here, "*When thou doest,*" &c. Supposing the *doing*, he proceeds to indicate the *right* doing of alms.

The force of "therefore" is, Seeing that, if ye do your alms before men to be seen of them, ye have no reward of your Father in heaven.

*Do not sound a trumpet before thee.*—It does not appear that, in any case, those who did alms had recourse to the literal sounding of trumpets to attract attention to their

\* It may be acceptable to the reader that we exhibit here the structure of the important passage to which we refer in the text.

- |    |    |                                                                                               |
|----|----|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| A. | a. | To them who by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory, and honour, and immortality, |
|    | b. | Eternal life:                                                                                 |
|    | B. | c. But unto them that are contentious, and do not obey the truth, but obey unrighteousness    |
|    |    | d. Indignation and wrath;                                                                     |
|    | B. | d. Tribulation and anguish,                                                                   |
|    |    | c. Upon every soul of man that doeth evil, of the Jew first, and also of the Gentile;         |
| A. | b. | But glory, honour, and peace,                                                                 |
|    | a. | To every man that worketh good, to the Jew first, and also to the Gentile.                    |

liberality, and they could not well have recourse to it “in the synagogues,” in which, however, the sounding of trumpets here intended took place. We are thus led to regard the expression as figurative. The ostentatious doer of alms virtually sounds a trumpet before him, for he uses the most effective means he can to give publicity and to attract attention to his alms-deeds. Of such a procedure the phraseology under consideration gives a peculiarly truthful and graphic representation; and, applied as it was to a known state of things, its figurative character would at once be perceived. Our Lord had just warned his hearers against a corruption of practice, with which, in an age remarkable for externalism and hypocrisy, they must have been familiar,—the doing of alms from motives of ostentation; and when now he represents all who did their alms from such motives, as sounding a trumpet before them, the representation would not only be quite intelligible to them, but would doubtless strike them as singularly graphic and effective. They would be in no danger of taking it literally. The actual procedure in the case to which it applied was such, it may be concluded, that the knowledge of it would preserve them from this error, and they would be preserved from it by the language itself, which would instantly expand into the view it presented the dim and defective conception they may have already had of hypocritical and ostentatious alms-doing. When figurative language exerts such a power, and thus fulfils its most important office, it reveals in doing so its own figurative character.

The principle of such phraseology is, that it applies to the *individual*—say the individual fact—not its name as an individual, but a designation derived from the distinctive character or from the type of the class to which it is referred; and does so for the purpose of presenting it as bearing the distinctive character, or of identifying it in respect of character with the type of that class. One’s sounding a trumpet before him may be regarded as the full development of self-

proclamation, and as the type of all acts and expedients that fall under this head. Accordingly, on the principle which we have stated, those who, in doing their alms, use means of self-proclamation, may be said to sound a trumpet before them, the phraseology thus employed indicating, not the individual means, but the class to which they belong, and their distinctive character as belonging to that class. It is not necessary, however, that the designation should be derived from a representative of the class formerly recognised as such; it is enough that the representative chosen exhibits at once, fully and vividly, the characteristic peculiarity to which attention is to be directed.

*Hypocrisy.*—(See Part III., sect. ii., par. 5.)—In discriminating righteousness as regards abstinence from what is forbidden, our Lord had to deal with an externalism, of which it was the peculiar vice that the righteousness which it retained and embodied was miserably partial, proceeding no further than abstinence from the outward acts expressly forbidden; but now, in discriminating righteousness as regards the performance of positive duty, he has to deal with a different species of externalism—namely, hypocrisy. Men's performance of positive duty distributes them into two classes. Some perform such duty not only outwardly, or in appearance and profession, but also "in spirit and in truth"—with the right exercises of soul, and from the right motives; but others, while they perform it outwardly, or in appearance and profession, have inwardly, concealed in their hearts from the observation of their fellow-men, very different views and aspirations from those it is intended to express and embody. These latter are hypocrites; and it is with the peculiar externalism which their performance of positive duty exemplifies, or, in other words, with hypocrisy, that Christ has here to deal.

The term *hypocrite*,—fitted for such an application by its earlier non-religious signification of *one who acts on the stage*,

sustaining, of course, an assumed character,—was adopted within the sphere of religion as an appropriate designation for one who sustains an assumed religious character.

Christ refers to hypocrites as a known class—"the hypocrites." Of those who perform the duties of which he is treating, the subjects of his own kingdom, who perform them in sincerity, form one class, and hypocrites the only other class. Accordingly, the former being addressed, the latter are justly referred to as known.

*In the synagogues and in the streets*—"In the chief places of concourse."—(Prov. i. 21.)—In the means of securing publicity indicated in our text two elements may be distinguished. Somewhat is done to draw attention—the hypocrites "sound a trumpet before them;" and a favourable time and place are chosen—they sound it "in the synagogues and in the streets."

*That they may have glory of men*.—We have here the ultimate end sought, to which the end formerly indicated—being seen of men—was only a means. Those who pursue this end substitute the judgment and allotments of men for the judgment and allotments of God, and their own glory for the glory of God. It is the former substitution—the substitution of a supreme regard to man for a supreme regard to God—that is specially exposed and forbidden in this member of the sermon.

*They have their reward*.—In v. 46 and vi. 1 the simple verb is used; but here, and in ver. 5 and 16, we have one of its compounds, which signifies *to have away*, that is, *to have by actual reception*, or *to have off or out*, that is, *to have in full*. The meaning, accordingly, is—that in the glory they obtain from men, they have, as already received by them, all the reward of their hypocritical alms-deeds they shall ever receive.

VER. 3.—*Let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth*.—The force of this injunction is, keep at the utmost distance from all ostentation and courting of notice and

applause in your alms-deeds. It carries the person addressed within the sphere of his own consciousness, and requires that no flattering notice be taken of his alms-deeds even there.—(See Part III., sect. ii., par. 5.)

VER. 4.—*That thine alms may be in secret.*—This result is to be sought in pursuing the course just prescribed. The person addressed is required to guard against even the remotest approach to the ostentatious exposure of his alms-deeds to the observation of his fellow-men, and to do so *in order that* his “alms may be in secret.” Publicity is not to be sought; but, further, it is to be dreaded. Occurring unsought it may excite the feelings, which, if they had existed previously, would cause it to be sought. In doing his alms, he is to deal with the case which God presents to him in his providence, and with God who presents it, and to keep at a distance from every thing that might divert or withdraw him from this course.

*And thy Father which seeth in secret.*—The secrecy of the alms-deeds will not withdraw them from the cognisance of God. Our Lord throughout, in prescribing the course to be pursued by his subjects, represents God as their Father (v. 45, 48; vi. 1, 4, 6, 9, 14, 15, 18, 26, 32), for it is only where God sustains the relation of Father, is viewed in that light, and is regarded with corresponding affections, that the course which he prescribes can be pursued; and, besides, in bestowing the gracious reward here promised, God acts in the character of a father blended with that of a judge. “Who seeth in secret” is an assertion of God’s omniscience, with a special reference and in terms directly applicable to the case in hand—the case of him who is careful that his alms may be in secret. We have a similar exhibition of the divine omniscience in Psalm cxxxix. After a general statement of it (1–6), the Psalmist reasserts it (11, 12), to meet and dissipate the groundless expectation that darkness may hide from God.

The verb “seeth” is used absolutely. The design is not to state what God sees, but that he sees under the circumstances specified—“in secret.”

*Himself shall reward thee openly.*—“Himself” contrasts more forcibly the rewarder in this case with the rewarders of hypocritical alms-deeds.—(Ver. 2.)

*Reward*—Requite.—The idea conveyed, so far at least as the requital is to be viewed as having reference to what is given to the poor, is more fully expressed in Prov. xix. 17—“He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto the Lord; and that which he hath given will he pay him again.” Full compensation will also be received for the “glory from men” which has been renounced. It is thus “the recompense of reward” (Heb. xi. 26) applicable to the case that is promised. And it shall be “openly” bestowed—bestowed in the presence of “all nations” (Matt. xxv. 32), and of the angelic hosts (2 Thess. i. 7, 10.)

In these three verses (2-4) our Lord contrasts the alms-doing required of the subjects of his kingdom with the alms-doing of the scribes and Pharisees. He presents the accompaniments, the aim, and the issue of the latter in ver. 2; and, in contrast with these, the accompaniments, the aim, and the issue of the former in ver. 3, 4. We shall best indicate the points of contrast by exhibiting the structure of the passage :—

- |    |  |                                                                                                                            |
|----|--|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| A. |  | When thou doest thine alms, do not sound a trumpet before thee, as the hypocrites do in the synagogues and in the streets, |
| B. |  | That they may be seen of men.                                                                                              |
| C. |  | Verily I say unto you, They have their reward.                                                                             |
| A. |  | But when thou doest alms, let not thy left hand know what thy right hand doeth :                                           |
| B. |  | That thine alms may be in secret ;                                                                                         |
| C. |  | And thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.                                                             |

In A. we have the Pharisaical mode of proceeding in doing alms, and in A. the contrasted mode of proceeding which

Christ prescribes; in *B.*, again, we have the aim, and in *C.* the issue of the former mode of proceeding, and in *B.* the contrasted aim, and in *C.* the contrasted issue of the latter mode of proceeding.

VER. 5.—*When thou prayest.*—See on, “When thou doest thine alms,” ver. 2.

*They love to pray standing in the synagogues, &c.*—Prayer is our Lord’s second instance of positive duty; and he here describes the procedure of “the hypocrites” with respect to it. As they did their alms, so they prayed, under the influence of a supreme regard to man. They might not always, or even often, be able, but they were always *disposed* to proceed with respect to prayer, as a supreme regard to man would prompt. This is the view presented in our text—“They *loved* to pray standing in the synagogues,” &c. In point of fact, restrained, as they must have been, by circumstances, and even by the necessity of avoiding the appearance that they might accomplish the design of ostentation, few of them prayed often, and some of them never prayed, in the circumstance described; but the Omniscient Preacher, “looking on their hearts,” saw there what would place them, every time they prayed, if it only had free scope and unchecked operation, where they should be best seen of men. It is what he thus saw in their hearts, and which specially determined their position with respect to prayer as that of “hypocrites,” that he expresses by “loved.” This verb, accordingly, instead of bearing an enfeebled or reduced meaning, denoting only an adverbial qualification of the praying, so that the force of the clause would be, “They cheerfully pray,” &c., or serving only to intimate that they “were wont” to proceed in the manner described (Winer, sec. 58. 4; Tholuck on our text; Robin. Lex. on the word), is here emphatic. “They love,” is the fundamental and decisive fact of the statement.

Our passage affords an important insight into the notice

taken by our Sovereign and Judge, in estimating our motives, of our habitual and prevailing dispositions and desires.

*Standing.*—As standing was the usual attitude in prayer, this special mention of it may seem to be unnecessary. It serves, however, to indicate that “the hypocrites” would adopt this attitude, not as usual, or as appropriate viewed in relation to the nature of the duty, but as the best fitted to make them conspicuous.

VER. 6.—*Enter into thy closet.*—Instead of resorting to the chief places of concourse to secure publicity, withdraw to a place of privacy. “Thy closet,” affording the greatest privacy, as being exclusively the individual’s own, is opposed to “the synagogues and the corners of the streets.”

*Thou hast shut thy door.*—The hypocrites not only love to resort to the chief places of concourse, but also, when there, by their attitude, and doubtless otherwise, to expose themselves the best they can to view; and, in opposition to this course, Christ prescribes that you not only withdraw to a place of privacy, but, when there, use every proper means to protect and deepen its privacy. The procedure which the hypocrites love to adopt consists of two parts—the choice of a place, and the use of further means to secure publicity; and the procedure which Christ prescribes consists also of two parts—the choice of a place, and the use of further means to secure privacy.

*Pray to thy Father which is in secret.*—When we have withdrawn ourselves from our fellow-men, and have shut ourselves up in the deep privacy of our closet, we may in this privacy have intercourse with God, for He “is in secret.” In this statement our Lord seems to glance at the Pharisaical love of publicity. It was not that they might find God that the scribes and Pharisees sought publicity, for God may at least as well be found “in secret.” It is not meant that He is exclusively in secret, any more than it is meant in the next clause that He seeth exclusively in secret.

In those warnings and directions with respect to prayer (ver. 5, 6), we find an arrangement adopted similar to that which we traced in the preceding warnings and directions with respect to alms-deeds. This arrangement, already indicated in detail, we shall now present at one view, following the order of the original:—

- A. | When thou prayest, thou shalt not be as the hypocrites are : for they love
  - a. | in the synagogues and in the corners of the streets,
  - b. | standing,
  - c. | to pray, that they may be seen of men.
- B. | Verily I say unto you, that they have their reward.
- A. | But thou, when thou prayest,
  - a. | enter into thy closet, and
  - b. | having shut thy door,
  - c. | pray to thy Father which is in secret ; and
- B. | thy Father which seeth in secret shall reward thee openly.

Here we have the prohibited procedure in A., and the prescribed procedure in A.; and their respective issues in B. and B. The elements which enter into the prohibited procedure are—the choice of an oratory (a.); further means of securing publicity (b.); exclusive reference to man (c.); and corresponding elements enter into the prescribed procedure—choice of an oratory (a.); further means of securing privacy (b.); and exclusive reference to God (c.)

VER. 7.—*When ye pray.*—(See Part III., sec. ii., par. 8.)

*Use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do.*—*Βαττολογεῖν*, the verb here used, has been derived by some from the name of one Battus, who stammered much, and who is also said to have been a composer of long tautological hymns. The view is probably to be preferred, that *battos*, which signifies a stammerer, was formed in imitation of stammering, and that the verb originated from this noun, with the primary meaning of *speaking like a stammerer*, and then assumed the more definite signification of *babbling; speaking vain words, and saying the same thing over and over; using vain repetitions.* Those

who speak thus will speak much ; and, accordingly, “much speaking” is represented as an intended and an actual result of the adoption by the heathen in their prayers of the mode of speaking in question. It also appears, from the consideration with which the prohibition of this mode of speaking is enforced,—“For your heavenly Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him,”—that it was used by the heathen as a means of making known their wants to their deities. For this purpose they naturally enough resorted to repetition, for the obstacles which they conceived they had to overcome were such as disinclination, indifference, inattention, and the obstruction of some occupation, on the part of their gods. A minute enumeration of the benefits they desired to obtain was also an obvious expedient. They had, further, to invoke many gods, and individual gods by many titles. This species of much speaking, however, we regard as excluded by the limitation, to which we have already adverted, of the object of the much speaking intended.

The priests of Baal afforded an example of much speaking in the form of repetition, on the occasion of the trial to which they were challenged by Elijah. They “called on the name of Baal from morning even until noon, saying, O Baal, hear us.”—(1 Kings xviii. 26.) It was evidently their feeling, with respect to the conditions of success, that much effort on their own part was necessary ; and, under the influence of this feeling, they not only called into requisition “their much speaking,” but leaped upon the altar, and cried aloud, and cut themselves with knives and lancets till the blood gushed out upon them. And this procedure was founded upon such conceptions of their god as Elijah tauntingly suggested to them—“Either he is talking, or he is pursuing, or he is in a journey, or peradventure he sleepeth, and must be awaked.” The glaring and aggravated example of repetition, and of much speaking as resulting from it, furnished by the ritual of the Church of Rome is well known.

"According to the rosary," says Tholuck, "the Ave Maria is prayed over 150, or 50, or 63 times, and the Paternoster, 15, or 7, or 5 times."

It is to be observed that "much speaking" occurs only where there is more speaking than is demanded by the compass and earnestness of the desires entertained. It is when the speaking is in excess of the desires that it bears the character of much speaking. Our Lord himself, on different occasions, spent a whole night in prayer; he spent thus the night which immediately preceded the delivery of the Sermon on the Mount; and on the night on which he was betrayed, when now his soul was exceeding sorrowful, even unto death, we find him repeating the same prayer twice (Matt. xxvi. 44); and we shall not violate his prohibition in our text by following the example which he has thus left us.

*As the heathen do.*—The practice condemned was a heathenish practice. It obtained also, however, among the Pharisees; but our Lord refers to the prevalence of it, not among these, but among the heathen, that he might thus present in the strongest light the necessity of excluding it from the worship of God.

*For they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.*—In virtue of their much speaking.—This is an enforcement of the prohibition. Such an expectation is so inconsistent with just views of the divine character, that any procedure founded upon it, or which implied it, should be wholly and emphatically declined. The heathen had recourse to their *battology*, in the expectation, entertained by them in their blindness, that in virtue of it they should be heard; but such an expectation could not be entertained, and the means of realising it therefore should not be employed, in praying to the true God.

VER. 8.—The prohibition of the preceding verse is reiterated, and the enforcement of it resumed and completed. The "much speaking" of the heathen originated in the ap-

prehension that their gods took no notice of their wants, or were wholly ignorant of them—an apprehension for which there was abundant ground; but the true God has perfect knowledge, and at all times, and without intermission, takes distinct notice of the wants of his creatures; and, further, he regards his adopted children with a Father's love. In praying to Him, therefore, an expedient for engaging attention, overcoming indifference, or communicating information, would be glaringly out of place.

## STRUCTURE OF VER. 7, 8.

- A. | When ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do :  
     B. | For they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.  
 A. | Be not ye therefore like unto them ;  
     B. | For your heavenly Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.

The prohibition in *A.* is reiterated in *A.*, and enforced in *B.* and *B.* In *B.* the enforcing consideration is implied, and expressly presented in *B.* In *B.* the motive from which the heathen “used vain repetitions”—the only motive for using them that could on any view be regarded as legitimate—is stated; and the consideration implied in this statement—that there is no room for the operation of such a motive when we pray to an omniscient Father—is expressly set forth in *B.* Thus *B.* forms the complement of *B.*, and presents the completed enforcement of the prohibition, which is briefly and in general terms reiterated in *A.*, for the purpose simply of subjecting it to this enforcement.

VER. 9.—*After this manner therefore pray ye.*—The corruption, which it is our Lord's object here to correct and prevent, is the use of vain repetitions in prayer. To enforce his prohibition of this battology, he urges that, while the heathen employed “much speaking” as a means of extorting from their deities a favourable consideration of their case, the subjects of his kingdom are under no necessity of resort-

ing to it for this purpose, inasmuch as their heavenly Father knoweth, and knoweth as their Father, what things they have need of, before they ask him. And now he directs that, seeing *this* is the case,—such is the force of “therefore,”—they pray after the manner which he proceeds to indicate.

We have here to inquire whether it is the use of the very words of the Lord's prayer, or the manner of praying which it exemplifies, that the direction “Thus pray ye” prescribes. On this point Tholuck pronounces the emphatic deliverance, “We can come to no other conclusion but that the precise words ought to be recited;” and yet, with that want of persistency which often characterises his expositions, he afterwards remarks that still it does not follow, that, even in the case of public worship, we should reject every prayer except the Lord's prayer. In support of this remark he adduces the fact that “Christ himself, and the apostles also, use other prayers,” referring to John xvii., Matt. xxvi. 39, Acts i. 24, iv. 24; and adds that we do not find, either in the Acts of the Apostles, or in any other writings prior to the third century, that the Lord's prayer was used as a formula in divine worship, while we have the distinct testimony of Justin Martyn, that in religious assemblies the president made the prayer, “having the qualification for this service.” What, then, in the face of this admission, and of the facts with which he thus supports it, are we to make of his deliverance, “that the precise words of the Lord's prayer ought to be recited?” If Christ requires that we pray in the very words of this prayer, how is it that we need not pray in them, and that Christ himself, and the apostles, and the church for at least two centuries, did not pray in them, but prayed in such other words as were suitable in the circumstances in which they prayed?

Tholuck holds, as we have seen, that though “Thus pray ye” is a requirement that we recite the Lord's prayer, still

we may use other prayers; and his facts teach us that we are not under obligation to use the Lord's prayer. As regards the former of those positions, if Christ, while he requires that we recite the Lord's prayer, leaves us at liberty to use other prayers also, such a requirement is in no way fitted to preserve us from the battology which it is his object here to prevent; for it is evident that *the other* prayers may be as grievously characterised by "much speaking" as they could have been though they were the only prayers we used. And, indeed, from the comprehensiveness of the Lord's prayer, we shall, in substance, unavoidably repeat its petitions in the prayers we use along with it, or repeat those prayers in its petitions; and this repetition, if the earnestness of our spirits do not prevent, will be a "vain repetition," and the prescribed preservative from such repetition—prescribed according to the interpretation which we now oppose—instead of preserving from it will promote it. But though we leave out of view all objections of this kind, and, wholly untrammelled by them, proceed at once to the direction itself, "Thus pray ye," can it legitimately be taken as applying to a portion only of our *praying*—to one only of many prayers which we use or may use? On what ground can it be held that the *declaratory* legislation of our text has this limited and partial bearing? The language conveys no intimation to that effect. We think it conveys an opposite intimation. The direction or requirement under consideration is the positive complement or continuation of the reiterated prohibition of ver. 7, 8, and, like that prohibition, is issued in reference to the department of duty specified in the introductory clause or *preamble*, "When ye pray."—(Ver. 7.) The extent of its application, accordingly, is ruled and determined by this clause; and the force of it, therefore, is, When ye pray, pray thus. It applies not to a portion of our praying, but to the whole of it. "When we pray," we must observe it; and,

surely, we pray on every occasion on which we pray, and from the beginning to the close of our praying. And even though the direction were viewed apart from the context, it would still claim for itself this extent of application. When we listen to the words, "Thus pray ye," the impression we receive is, that in our praying, that is, in our praying throughout, we are required to proceed as directed. It thus appears that if the direction, "Thus pray ye," prescribes the use of the very words of the Lord's prayer, it prescribes the use of them as the whole of our praying. This conclusion, on the supposition on which we draw it, seems to be inevitable.

The other position, that we are not under obligation to use the Lord's prayer, which, we presume, we may regard as fully established by the fact that this prayer was not used by the apostles themselves, or by the church when its worship was under their personal guidance, is in direct contradiction to the view that our text prescribes the recital of the Lord's prayer. The apostles understood and obeyed the prescription of our text, but there is no vestige of this recital in their worship.

We are thus shut in to the other view of our text—the view that it prescribes only the manner of praying, which the Lord's prayer exemplifies; and, to say the least, the language employed does not discountenance this view. The adverb of our text, *δὺνως*—a demonstrative adverb—points to, or, in this sense, *demonstrates*, as specified in the immediate context, a certain manner of performing the action denoted by the verb with which it is construed, that is, a certain manner of praying. It does not itself determine more or less what constitutes the manner so specified. And what is thus its force in this passage, is also its force in all similar passages. It has, indeed, been stated that "where the subject is *publishing* or *reciting*, so as that after *δὺνως*, the words also are given, . . . . the precise words

ought to be recited.”—(*Tholuck*.) This statement, however, determines nothing; for, in the first place, it takes for granted the very thing to be proved, that “the subject is *reciting*,” and then, farther, it is quite unnecessary to tell us that, when the subject is reciting, “the precise words *ought* to be recited.” But we contend that the *subject* here is not reciting—that it is not the *recitation* of the Lord’s prayer that is prescribed in our text. In support of his statement Tholuck refers to six passages. In five of those passages (*Matt.* ii. 5; *Acts* vii. 6, xiii. 34, 47; *Rom.* x. 6), the adverb of our text is construed with such verbs, and those verbs used under such circumstances, that the specification of the manner to which it points, in the discharge of its demonstrative function, must in each case consist in the recitation of certain words. It is only by such a recitation that the manner, or whatever else it is, to which it points, in “thus it is written by the prophet” (*Matt.* ii. 5), “God spake on this wise” (*Acts* vii. 6), “He said on this wise” (xiii. 34), “so hath the Lord commanded us” (ver. 47), “speaketh on this wise” (*Rom.* x. 6), could well be specified. But, then, the question with which we are concerned is not what constitutes the proper specification of the manner of praying pointed to in our text, but what constitutes that manner of praying itself. Those five passages, therefore, are altogether irrelevant. They may serve to show that if, in giving an historical account of the delivery of the Sermon on the Mount, we introduced our reference to the Lord’s prayer with the statement, “Christ then spoke thus,” a subjoined recital of the words of the prayer would be the proper specification of the manner in which he spoke; but they do not at all show that the recital of them constitutes the manner of praying which he prescribes. The remaining passage (*Luke* xix. 31) is open to the same objection; but we have reserved it for separate consideration, that we might advert to another portion of the same context (ver.

34) that seems to favour the view which we oppose. In ver. 31, Christ gives this direction to the two disciples whom he there addresses, "If any man ask you, Why do ye loose him? thus shall ye say unto him, Because the Lord hath need of him;" and in ver. 34 we find that the question for which he thus prepared them having been put to them, they answered in the very words which he had instructed them to use. It is to be observed, however, that they were mere messengers, and messengers in a case in which they were neither authorised nor qualified to exercise any thought or deliberation of their own. No course was open to them, therefore, but to proceed in exact conformity to the very letter of their instructions. But it was the nature of the case, and not the force of the demonstrative adverb in "Thus shall ye say," that shut them in to this course.

The position of such, however, as approach God in prayer is altogether different. There are certain facts and circumstances with respect to which it is their duty to pray; and their position requires that they take earnest notice of those facts and circumstances, that their souls be rightly exercised in reference to them, and then that their praying be the outgoing of the exercises of their souls in corresponding dealing with God. Thus, praying does not consist in any recitation or utterance of words; it is not a thing of the lips. The use of language is, indeed, necessary in social prayer, but it is not the language used that in any instance imparts to it its character or forms its essence. Accordingly, when our Lord says, "Thus pray ye," referring to the prayer which he immediately subjoins, he cannot, we conceive, from the nature of the duty to which the direction applies, be regarded as prescribing the recitation of the subjoined prayer. What he prescribes is, doubtless, such that the realisation of it would constitute praying properly so called. It cannot, therefore, be the recitation

in question; for there may be any amount of recitation, no matter what the words recited are, and yet no real praying. In a sermon directed specially and throughout against externalism, and in a context of which it is the immediate aim to recover praying from a corruption that had reduced it to a mere utterance of words—an utterance of them naturally enough the more abundant as there was nothing besides—it would evidently be inconsistent, and even contradictory, to prescribe the utterance of certain words as praying. But it is contended that the design is to secure that the words uttered shall be few, and thus to put an end to “much speaking.” But, then, however few the words uttered may be, not only is the utterance of them, if they are only recited, a mere external service, but also, in that case, it forms the very kind of praying which our Lord has just forbidden,—such praying as consists in the mere utterance of words,—for it is only such an utterance of words that can expand into “much speaking,” in the sense of the preceding context.

On another occasion, the Lord’s prayer is introduced with the direction, “When ye pray, say” (Luke xi. 2); and “say” in this direction has been held to be an express requirement that the very words which follow should be recited. We have already seen that this view of the use to be made of the Lord’s prayer is inadmissible, and the occurrence of *say* in the direction now under consideration imposes no necessity to adopt it. This verb, in the absence of all extraneous influence—such as that of occasion and subject—would probably present the idea of an exact recitation of the words that follow; but, under such influence, it readily assumes the meaning of saying, though it may be in a more extended form, or otherwise diversified, what those words present. We apprehend it is used in this sense in Matt. x. 7. In sending forth the twelve on the occasion referred to in that passage, Christ commanded them to

"preach, saying, The kingdom of heaven is at hand." Now, it certainly was not his intention, in giving this command, that their preaching should consist exclusively of the ever-recurring utterance of those words, or that those words should from time to time be introduced or interjected by them, and should thus form a part of their preaching. The command applied to the whole of their preaching, and determined the entire matter, but not the words of it. As regarded the former, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand" was all they were to say. This was to be the theme and the substance of their preaching. Accordingly, the account which Luke gives of this part of their commission is, that Christ "sent them to preach the kingdom of God," and their execution of it he describes as consisting in "preaching the gospel," (ix. 2, 6)—thus using language in both cases which clearly denotes more than the bare repetition of the words, "The kingdom of heaven is at hand." Again, though Luke gives only the substance of the Sermon on the Mount, he introduces his report of it with the verb now under consideration, "He lifted up his eyes upon his disciples, and said"—(vi. 20.)

The view is wholly to be rejected, that the Lord's prayer was more or less derived from prayers at the time or previously in use among the Jews. Passages, to which certain portions of it bear a resemblance, have been found scattered in Rabbinical writings; but this discovery by no means proves the derivation from such passages of the portions that resemble them. Even in the case of merely human authorship, such resemblance to preceding writers may afford no proof of plagiarism.

But Christ's relation to the circumstances and attainments of the period, and to all the subjects that engaged or could engage him in the course of his ministry, was altogether peculiar. Divine providence, by a long and vastly complicated process, had brought all things into a state of preparedness for his appearing. All that constituted

and characterised the state of things thus presented to him, he fully, without effort, and always, apprehended and appreciated. And, particularly, whatever of all that entered into it, whether found in Rabbinical writings, or wheresoever else, was truly good, and, therefore, to be preserved and perpetuated, was the accomplishment so far of his own design, and the result of his own administration, for he is "God over all."—(Rom. ix. 5.) How contracted and erroneous, therefore, are the views of those who regard him as receiving suggestions from such things, and in some sort enriching his own stores by the appropriation of them! As well might they regard a father as borrowing the thoughts and the language of his own addresses to the throne of grace, from the prayers he had composed for his children, or rather had led and assisted them to compose for themselves. But, further, Christ had a clear, full, and abiding apprehension of what prayer ought to be. All the facts, and interests, and results, to which it has reference, and its precise relation to each of them, were "naked and opened unto his eyes;" and he knew, with a knowledge free from uncertainty and all imperfection, what was necessary to adapt it to those facts, and interests, and results, and thus to fit it for its place and office. It seems impossible, therefore, that, in presenting an example or comprehensive syllabus of prayer, he should derive materials from any other resources than those supplied by his own knowledge. How could he who knew all things (John xxi. 17), and therefore saw, in the clear, all-revealing light of omniscience, what the case required, seek foreign aid in dealing with it? We need not advert to the incongruity of his seeking aid from the dim, uncertain glimmerings of human attainment, for we cannot conceive of his seeking aid from any foreign source.

Luke reports the Lord's prayer in a different connection, in which also it was uttered.—(xi. 2-4.)—(See Intro., sect. iii., par. 19-21.)

The Lord's prayer received its form and its entire character from a full and perfect comprehension of the whole economy of the divine government. This comprehension presented what, if reached by such processes as our own minds conduct, we should call the results of the highest generalization, and these systematised or arranged according to their relations. With what it thus presented, as it thus presented it, the Lord's prayer deals according to the nature and office of prayer; and hence—within its proper province—its all-embracing comprehensiveness, and, as the necessary concomitant of such comprehensiveness, its *finished* brevity; hence, also, its plenitude and profundity of meaning.

The structure of the prayer, so far at least as we trace it in the following scheme, and, we think, its entire structure, has its basis in the *invocation*:—

GENERAL STRUCTURE OF THE LORD'S PRAYER.

- A. | Father,
- B. | Our \* (of us),
- C. | Who art in heaven,
- A. | Hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.
- B. | Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts, as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil:
- C. | For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, for ever.

It is to those whom he distinguishes not only from "the heathen," but also from "the hypocrites,"—that is, to the subjects of his own kingdom,—that Christ addresses the direction, "Thus pray ye;" and he teaches them to begin their prayers with a solemn invocation of God, claiming and viewing him as their Father (A.), and thus placing themselves before him under cover, so to speak, of his fatherly relation to them (B.); and, having thus appealed to his paternal affection, summoned into exercise the correspond-

\* We retain the order of the Greek.

ing affection on their own part, and assured their hearts before him that he is disposed to bless them, then to advert to his majesty and power (C.), in virtue of which he is able to bless them—thus further encouraging their hearts to expect his blessing.

From the fundamental views and considerations thus embodied and presented in the invocation, he leads them on to corresponding petitions. 'In the first place, viewing God as their Father, they are to prefer the appropriate petitions of filial love and devotedness (A.); and then the petitions suitable to their circumstances as his necessitous children, ever falling into sin, and oppressed with spiritual evils (B.) Having thus made known their requests, they are directed to support and urge them by appealing to him as the sovereign of all, to whom alone they can flee, and to whom all power belongs (C.) Thus to the three members or elements of the invocation, the three remaining portions of the prayer respectively correspond.

There is also, we apprehend, mingled or combined with the general parallelism which we have now traced, a similar relation of the members of each of the other portions to those of the invocation. Thus, while the three petitions in A. are founded upon the contemplation of God as a Father (A.), they correspond, at the same time, to the three members of the invocation, the first corresponding to the first, the second to the second, and the third to the third. Contemplating God as a Father (A.), we pray that his name may be hallowed. In order that his name may be hallowed, it is necessary that his kingdom come; and, accordingly, we further pray for the coming of his kingdom. But while this petition bears upon the hallowing of God's name, it bears equally and at the same time upon our own interests, if we are indeed his children and the accepted subjects of his kingdom (B.), for to all such the coming of his kingdom will bring not only deliverance and security, but final victory

and triumph. In the remaining petition of this series, still with a view to the hallowing of our heavenly Father's name, we pray that, as a result of the coming of his kingdom, his "will may be done on earth, as it is in heaven." Here there is an express reference to the last member of the invocation (C.). In that member God is contemplated as invested with majesty and power in heaven, where he receives universal obedience; and here, recognising his majesty and power, we pray that, as a result of the exertion of his power (Ps. cx. 3; Eph. i. 19, ii. 5, v. 9), and in acknowledgment of his claims, similar obedience may be rendered to him on earth.

In the second series of petitions (*B.*), compared with the invocation, we may detect a similar parallelism. This series, as a whole, has reference to the second member of the invocation (*B.*); but, at the same time, this reference being still retained, the first petition of it is parallel to the first member of the invocation, the second to the second, and the third to the third. In the first petition, we pray, with an evident reference to God's fatherly care (*A.*), "Give us this day our daily bread." In the second petition of this series, as in the second of the former, we contemplate God's kingdom; and, deeply sensible that as subjects of it, though accepted subjects (*B.*), we need pardon, we pray for this blessing. Then, passing from our relative position to our personal character and conduct, we pray, in the third of those petitions, which is parallel to the third petition of the former series, and, like that petition, to the third member of the invocation (*C.*), for preservation from all that would reduce us into sin, and for full, final deliverance from all that is opposed to perfect righteousness. This petition has clearly the same bearing within our own individual sphere, as the last petition of the preceding series has upon the whole range of human character and activity on earth; and, like that petition, it contemplates God as "in heaven" (*C.*),

entitled to obedience, and forming for himself a people by whom it will be rendered.

The conclusion of the prayer, as we have already indicated, is based upon the third member of the invocation; but, further, as in the portions already examined, the individual members of the one correspond to the individual members of the other. Here, however, we find a remarkable departure from the arrangement of the members of the series hitherto observed. In the other series, the first member corresponds to the first member of the invocation, but the first member of the conclusion corresponds to the second member of the invocation and of each of the other series, the second to the third, and the third to the first. In the first member, the fact is presented and urged, that the kingdom is God's—a fact which, it will be perceived from the remarks already made, is parallel to the second member of the invocation, and to the second petition of each of the two series. Then, in the second member, a fact parallel to the third member of the invocation, and to the third petition of each of the two series, is presented and urged—that the power is God's. And in the third, in which the fact that the glory is God's is presented and urged, the parallel to the first member of the invocation appears. The contemplation of God as our Father (A.), with which the prayer opens, originated its first petition, "Hallowed be thy name," and its closing statement, "Thine is the glory." The filial spirit is the fundamental qualification for complying with the direction, "Thus pray ye;" and its *first* and *last*, and ever-predominant desire is, "Glory to God in the highest." It is this important truth that the peculiarity of arrangement which we have now under consideration,—the removal to the *last* place in the series of the statement that the glory is God's, which, if uniformity were maintained, should occupy the *first* place,—is, we conceive, intended to convey. The reader may remember that we met with a previous instance of a similar

peculiarity of arrangement adopted to serve a similar purpose.—(See on v. 45, p. 174.)

The conclusion of the Lord's prayer has been held by many critics to be spurious. It is so exactly adapted, however, and so closely adheres to the other portions, and is so firmly embraced and enclosed in the structure which binds together the separate portions into one compact, symmetrical whole, that, being quite in a position, from the fact that it is supported by the authority of many MSS., to assign its full value to internal evidence of its authenticity, we cannot but regard it as having formed originally an integral part of the prayer.

In Luke's report of a very similar, if not the same prayer, uttered by our Lord on a different occasion, the member now in question is wanting—(xi. 2-4.) This, however, does not prove that it was wanting in the prayer as uttered. The reports of the evangelists are in every instance faithful reports, so far as they go; but the design of the Gospels certainly seldom requires that they should be full reports of all that was said and done on the occasions to which they refer. But if the conclusion *was* wanting in the prayer as uttered, this again is no proof, and does not even afford a presumption, that it was wanting in the Lord's prayer in our passage. But, though Luke's report cannot be regarded as representing the original form of Matthew's, it may have affected the transmission of it, for it is quite intelligible that an attempt should be made to bring the one into conformity to the other; but, if they were originally the same, why has the existing diversity been produced? We should naturally suppose that one bent on interpolation would simultaneously and similarly corrupt the text of both.

*Our Father, who art in heaven.*—The righteous have received, in Christ, the adoption of sons. They are, consequently, the children of God, and God, in a corresponding sense, is their father. On a different ground, and in a lower sense,

he is the father of all (Mal. ii. 10); and on still a different ground, and in a higher sense, he is the father of his eternal and co-equal son.—(John i. 14, 18.) In each case the pater-nity is the correlative of the sonship. In the case of creatures, sonship is attended with the privileges proper to its sphere; and thus sonship by adoption, which is spiritual in its nature and bearing, is attended with spiritual privileges. God, accordingly, in discharge of the proper office of the correlative paternity, will fully and effectually make good those privileges to his adopted children. They are themselves weak and helpless—a fact which their relative position as children implies—but he, as their father, will make his own sufficiency, strength, and resources available for them.—(See on “Children of God,” ver. 9, p. 65, and Part III., sect. iv., par. 5.) All this they recognise and present in calling upon him as their father. And further, they recognise, and summon their souls to recognise practically, his claim to their supreme love—his claim to it as their father, as such a father, as having first loved them so that he became their father, and as now loving them with a father’s love.

*Our.*—It is social prayer specially that our Lord exemplifies. The bonds of brotherhood in which the righteous are united, and the corresponding brotherly interest they should feel in each other’s welfare, are also indicated. The phraseology is, indeed, allied to the still deeper fact, that it is only in the consummated welfare of the whole brotherhood that the consummated welfare of each can be realised.

*Who art in heaven.*—God is here viewed as the universal sovereign, clothed with majesty and power, and doing all that seemeth good to him, ever executing righteous judgment, and protecting, delivering, and blessing all who fear him and flee to him. When we view him in this light, we shall regard him with reverence; and the confidence inspired by the contemplation of him as our father will be confirmed and established.—(Ps. xi. 4–7, ciii. 19, cxv. 4, cxxiii. 1, comp.

3, 4; Lamén. iii. 41, comp. 37, 42-50; 2 Chron. xx. 6; Isa. lvii. 15, xxxiii. 5; Eccl. v. 2; Heb. vii. 1.)

*Hallowed be thy name.*—The name of God serves to make him known, and to present him to our mind.—(Exod. vi. 3, 6, xxxiv. 6, 7, comp. xxxiii. 18, 19; John xvii. 6, 7, 25, 26.) It is thus set apart to a holy use, and, in being thus set apart, is *made holy*, or hallowed in this sense.—(Ps. xcix. 3, cxi. 9; Luke i. 49.) And when, viewing it as the name of God and holy, we use and hear it with reverence, and in the exercise of right affections, it is *kept holy* by us, or “hallowed” in the sense of our text. The verb of our text is used to convey this idea, as in Exod. xx. 8.

God has so arranged that his name is uttered, or, in other words, that he is himself presented to us, in a variety of ways and continually. His name is uttered by his works (Ps. xix. 1, xciv. 9); it is uttered by his providence (Ps. lxxvi. 1-10, xciv. 10); it is uttered by his word and his ordinances; and, in whatsoever way it is uttered, it is still to be hallowed—that is, applied to the holy use to which it has been set apart of presenting God to the soul, and awakening or maintaining and heightening there the feelings with which he ought ever to be regarded.

Thus, the petition under consideration is, that, as God’s name is ever uttered everywhere, so it may ever and everywhere be hallowed by all. If the hallowing of it thus prayed for were realised, what a glorious spectacle the earth would present! May the Lord hasten it in its time!

The reader will perceive that we do not regard the name of God as a periphrasis for God himself. This deviation from the proper and usual meaning of *name* would greatly mar, we conceive, the beauty and significance of the petition; and, besides, it seems arbitrary. It may be difficult to seize the precise conception embodied in the petition, if *name* be regarded as contributing to that conception its own proper share, and a similar difficulty may be felt in the case of other

passages; but this is no reason why the term from the presence of which the difficulty arises should be treated as *otiant*—wholly inactive.

VER. 10.—*Thy kingdom come.*—For the idea to be attached to “thy kingdom,” see on “The kingdom of heaven,” pp. 55, 56. To a certain extent the kingdom of God is already come, as regards the outward administration of it (Matt. xii. 28; Luke x. 9, 11), and as regards its inward power and its privileges.—(Rom. xiv. 17; Luke xvii. 21, xviii. 17.) There is, however, much territory still to be conquered in the world, and even in the hearts of those who have already received the kingdom; and in our text we are taught to pray that continually more and more, and ultimately, the whole of this territory may be conquered. It is only in so far as God’s kingdom comes that his name will be hallowed, for none hallow his name but such as have been brought to do so by the coming of his kingdom with power in their own case.

*Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven.*—By the will of God is to be understood his will with respect to human activity—his will which is done by those who obey him (Matt. vii. 21, xii. 50; Eph. vi. 6; Heb. x. 36; 1 John ii. 17); and the prayer here is, that it may be done by all and fully. The will of God, which he himself executes (Acts xxi. 14; 1 Pet. iii. 17), cannot be here intended; for his will, in this sense, is done on earth as it is done in heaven (Isa. xlvi. 10, 11; Ps. cxxxv. 6), and there is no room therefore for praying that it may be done. Neither can we understand the language of our text as expressing acquiescence, for acquiescence is not an appropriate state of mind with respect to God’s execution of his will in heaven, or with respect to much of his execution of it on earth. We shall afterwards see that the connection of this petition with those that precede it, requires that we understand God’s will as denoting his will with respect to human activity.

“In heaven” God’s will is done by all and always, without deviation or shortcoming (Ps. ciii. 20 ; Rev. xxi. 27) ; and the prayer here is, that it may be so “done on earth.”

The first petition of this series, the first also of the prayer, respects the great end to be sought—the hallowing of God’s name. To hallow the name of God is to glorify him, as he is glorified, not by *issues*, but by conduct—by godliness and righteousness,—and by these, not as constituting an issue or a fact, but as the conscious, deliberate procedure of his people towards him. Thus, from the very outset, this prayer is the utterance of love to God, love to righteousness, love to man. It is wholly conceived in the spirit of Christ’s kingdom, and embodies the distinctive desires and aspirations of its subjects. That God’s name may be hallowed, his kingdom must come. The coming of his kingdom, accordingly, is the subject of the second petition. In order, however, that the hallowing of his name may result from the coming of his kingdom, an intermediate result must arise,—the power and agencies of his kingdom must so change and elevate the character of men that his will shall be done on earth as it is done in heaven. This result once gained, and, so far as it is gained, his name *shall* be hallowed, for the hallowing of his name is just the doing of his will with due reference to him. Thus, the petitions descend from the end to the means, what more properly occupies the place of means appearing in the second of them, and in the third an intermediate result that must be reached. Accordingly, ascending from the means to the end, the order of the petitions is,—Thy kingdom come,—as a result of its coming, thy will be done on earth as it is done in heaven,—and thus thy name hallowed.

VER. 11.—*Give us this day our daily bread.*—This is the first petition of the second series. Of the word rendered *daily*, which occurs only here and in the parallel passage in Luke (xi. 3), the interpretation is attended with much diffi-

culty; and to remove this difficulty, the utmost efforts of extensive erudition, and profound and accurate scholarship, have been put forth, as may be seen very fully in Tholuck on the passage, and also, though less fully, in Wolf's *Curæ*. We cannot but think that such efforts are often put forth when they are unnecessary. Here, however, they are not unnecessary, for our passage is one of those, happily not very numerous comparatively, in which the *language* involves serious difficulty. Generally, we apprehend, the language performs its own proper office without assistance, and generally therefore, we apprehend further, exposition has to deal mainly with the ideas,—investigating, for example, the relations they sustain, their mode of combination, the views resulting, the relations of these, the modifying influence exerted or the special reference imparted by scope and connection.

In the case before us, etymology affords the only available clue to the meaning. In endeavouring to deduce the meaning from the etymology, some have derived *ἐπιούσιον* from the participle *ἐπιούσα*, in the sense of *the following day*. The meaning thus obtained is, *to-morrow's bread*, a meaning which cannot be made to fit into the connection without much violence. Clearly our Lord does not direct us to pray that we may receive to-day to-morrow's bread. He expressly forbids, in the last verse of this chapter, such anxiety for to-morrow as would dictate this prayer. With the view of effecting an escape from this difficulty, it has been proposed to substitute for *to-morrow's* the wider sense of *future*, and to attach to the word rendered *to-day* the meaning of *from day to day*. That word does not, however, bear this meaning; but, though this objection were waived, the sense obtained is not satisfactory—"Give us this and every future day our future bread." There is here, though perhaps more disguised, the same taking of thought for the morrow as the petition, "Give us to-day to-morrow's bread,"

would indicate. The sense yielded by this etymology being thus inadmissible, others have derived *ἐπιούσιον* from *ἐπί* and *ούσία* in the sense of *existence, life*. According to this derivation, it denotes *for the support of life, i.e., sufficient*; and our petition runs, "Give us this day bread sufficient for us." Here we have two limitations of the desire altogether in harmony with the aim of the sermon,—it is limited to the present day according to the direction at the end of this chapter, and then further, as the same desire is in Prov. xxx. 8, to sufficient sustenance.

God is here presented to us as the dispenser of temporal benefits. He may, and generally does, employ our own skill and labour as means of supplying us with them. Still, we do not procure them for ourselves by our skill and labour; it is he that in every case bestows them upon us. Some, indeed, would understand our petition as referring to spiritual nourishment. This interpretation must be rejected, on the ground that the language naturally points to food for the body, and there is nothing to divert it from that reference; and, besides, the two following petitions embrace the whole extent of our spiritual wants. What, however, we wish particularly to remark is, that such a petition as the one before us, for the supply of our bodily wants, greatly heightens the power of the prayer to promote our spirituality. It is when we contract our desires within the limits assigned to them by this petition, and then cast our care upon God with respect to the fulfilment of them, that we shall be least hindered by things on earth from setting our affection upon things in heaven. It is by admitting earthly things into our prayers, as they are admitted here, and thus alone, that we shall duly exclude them from our heart. If we do not in regard to them cast our care upon God, we shall certainly be too much cumbered with them ourselves.

VER. 12.—*Forgive us our debts*.—This petition respects

our relative position. Those to whom our Lord says, "Thus pray ye," are viewed as already the justified subjects of his kingdom, and none of them shall come into condemnation, so as to be cast out of the kingdom.—(Rom. viii. 1.) They are not under the law, which gives to sin both its condemning and enslaving power, but under grace, from the nature of which it is quite alien to condemn.—(Rom. vi. 14, v. 21; 1 Cor. xv. 56.) At the same time, though they are not under the law as prescribing the condition and denouncing the penal sanction of the covenant of works, they are under it as a rule of life.—(1 Cor. ix. 21.)—(See Part II., sect. ii., par. 27.) Accordingly, when they transgress it, they become obnoxious to visitations which, though disciplinary in their effects, are penal in their elements and aspect.—(Ps. lxxxix. 32.) In this fact there is a basis for the petition of our text. But, further, sin, instead of losing any of its criminality as being theirs, acquires increased heinousness from the fact, that those by whom it is committed have been brought under peculiar obligations to render the most devoted service to God; and as it thus retains its criminality, or, in other words, deserves the punishment of eternal death, their procedure with respect to it must correspond. When our conduct deserves punishment, we need forgiveness.

The word here rendered *debts*, means *what is due, what one owes*. In the first place, we owe perfect obedience to God, and, when we occupy the position of persons who have failed to render this obedience, we owe him further full satisfaction to his justice. Our sins thus entail obligation to punishment, and as doing so, they are here called "debts."

*As we forgive our debtors*.—If we forgive our debtors, and in that case only, God will forgive us our debts. One ground of this restriction is, that, while forgiveness is connected with faith, where there is true faith there are also a forgiving spirit, and its practical working. All who believe

forgive, and therefore, as none who do not believe, so none who do not forgive, receive forgiveness. There is also a further ground of the restriction in question that deserves serious consideration. Those only who are themselves of a forgiving spirit can really pray for forgiveness. We cannot entertain an enlightened and rational expectation that God will adopt a particular procedure, whether towards ourselves or in any other case, unless we see the highest excellence and beauty in that procedure; and, then, if we view it in this light, we shall adopt it ourselves so far as it may be capable of adoption within our sphere. We cannot, for example, entertain an enlightened and rational expectation that God will forgive us our debts, unless we see the highest excellence and beauty in the forgiveness of sin for the sake of Christ; and, then, if we view forgiveness in this light, we shall ourselves forgive. Accordingly, if we do not forgive, we do not see, our hearts do not recognise, moral excellence and beauty in forgiveness, and we cannot therefore rationally expect and cannot really pray for forgiveness from God. It is, we apprehend, on the connection which thus obtains between a forgiving spirit, and intelligent, sincere, God-honouring prayer for forgiveness, that the limitation of our petition is founded. We further observe, however, that the general principle also applies here, that if we regard iniquity in our heart, the Lord will not hear us.—(Ps. lxxvi. 18.) Those who do not forgive are of an unforgiving spirit, and thus both commit sin and regard it in their heart. It may be necessary to add, that it would be altogether erroneous to suppose, that those who forgive their debtors acquire by doing so a right or a claim to forgiveness from God. The meritorious cause of the forgiveness they receive is not the forgiveness they grant, or anything whatever in their own conduct or character, but what Christ has done for them.

In praying to God for a blessing, which he thus bestows only in connection with a certain spirit and practice on our

own part, it is evidently necessary that we be in a position to view and represent ourselves before him as cherishing that spirit and maintaining that practice. If we forgive our debtors, he will also forgive us; but, if we do not forgive our debtors, he will not forgive us. He will deal with us in this matter as we deal with our fellow-men. We can, therefore, address to him no other petition than, substantially, that of our text,—fully recognising that he does not forgive the unforgiving, but, at the same time, humbly submitting that we are not unforgiving, that, on the contrary, we forgive our debtors, and praying that he, in like manner,—such is the force of “as,”—the case being thus realised in which he grants forgiveness, may grant it to us.

Thus “as” indicates correspondence as to *mode* of acting. Forgiving our debtors, we pray that God may, *in like manner*, forgive us our debts; not that he may forgive our debts *to the same extent* to which we forgive our debtors.

The form of the petition seems to be derived from the promise on which it is founded. The promise is, If ye forgive your debtors, your heavenly Father will also, or in like manner, forgive you your debts (ver. 14); and the petition is simply this promise cast into a petitionary form. In the one, a blessing is promised—“Your heavenly Father will forgive you your debts;” and in the other, that blessing is asked—“Forgive us our debts.” In the one, a condition is stated on which the bestowal of the promised blessing is suspended—“If ye forgive your debtors;” and in the other it is set forth that that condition has been fulfilled—“As we forgive our debtors.”

We have already observed that, when “we forgive our debtors,” we do not, more or less, acquire a right to forgiveness; we merely come within the range of the gratuitous bestowal of it, by the removal of the insurmountable obstacle in the way of such bestowal, which, as we have somewhat explained, an unforgiving spirit and procedure present.

VER. 13.—*And lead us not into temptation; but deliver us*

*from evil.*—From our relative position, we are conducted to our personal character. The petitions thus follow the order of dependence and realization. Until our relations to God have been rectified, we are wholly incapable of cultivating holiness; and, after they have been rectified, when at any time they are disturbed, or, rather, when at any time the privileges connected with rectified relations to God are interrupted, this incapacity returns. In dealing with such a case,—and, alas! it is a case with which the righteous have continually to deal,—we must first pray for the forgiveness of our debts, and then for the upholding of our goings, and for deliverance from evil.

In the portion of the Lord's prayer now under consideration, we recognise only one petition. The righteous are engaged in a life-and-death struggle with "evil;" and this portion of the prayer has reference to that struggle. Finding that they cannot be stationary, but must either experience a series of reverses, or advance towards victory, they pray,—so our Lord directs them,—that not the former, but the latter, may be the actual issue. In every petition, deprecation is either implied or expressed. For whatever benefit we pray, we deprecate, by implication, if not expressly, the opposite evil. In our text, from the peculiarly urgent character of the evil deprecated, the deprecation is, with great propriety, expressed; but, though expressed, it does not form a distinct petition; it is still but an element of the petition, in which, if not expressed, it would be implied.

The righteous, while here, are still in circumstances of trial—in circumstances which try their faith and their love to God and to holiness; they are exposed to much that is fitted to draw or to turn them aside from the narrow path of duty and of life. It is not, however, this *standing* trial that is intended in our text, but one more severe. We have an instance of such severer trial in the trial to which God subjected Abraham, when he commanded him to sacrifice his

son Isaac, his only son, whom he loved.—(Gen. xxii. 1, 2; Heb. xi. 17, 18.) By giving this command, he placed the patriarch in circumstances peculiarly trying, or, in the language of our text, “led him into temptation.” Now, such temptations often arise from circumstances that are painful in their nature or physically evil, and they are always to be regarded as attended with danger, and therefore formidable.—(Heb. xi. 36; Prov. xxx. 8, 9; 1 Pet. iv. 12–18.) Hence, notwithstanding that, when allotted to the righteous, they are made to promote their spiritual welfare (James i. 2, 3, 12), they are to be earnestly deprecated. If we court them, or even expose ourselves to them heedlessly, we violate the obvious rule, that we are to seek only what is good,—good physically while not evil morally, or good morally though evil physically. But if, while we desire and use legitimate means to escape them, we are still led into them, we may in that case commit the keeping of our souls to Him who knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptation.—(1 Pet. iv. 19; 2 Pet. ii. 9.)

While God, in the holy administration of his providence, and for wise and holy ends, leads men into temptation in the sense already indicated, and in this sense tempts them, he “does not tempt any man” in the sense of “drawing him away and enticing him” to commit sin.—(James i. 13, 14.)

In the positive branch of the petition we are taught to desire total deliverance “from evil.”—(See on “Evil,” ver. 37, p. 164.)

Our Lord directs the subjects of his kingdom to pray in the manner here prescribed, during the whole of their sojourn on earth, and, accordingly, while they are here, they shall need continually to be visited with the blessings prayed for in this and the preceding petition,—to be pardoned and to be sanctified.

*For thine is the kingdom, &c.*—In the epilogue or conclusion of the prayer, upon which we now enter, the grounds are

set forth upon which the preceding petitions are addressed to God, and the blessings prayed for expected from him. The connection is, To thee we pray and look for these blessings, "*for thine is the kingdom,*" &c. The praise is ascribed to God, and the appeal is made to him, that he, and he alone, has authority and power, and that it is his—exclusively his—prerogative to bestow the blessings prayed for, and that to him, and to him alone, the resulting glory redounds. But, while the conclusion as a whole supports each of the petitions, each member of it supports more especially the petitions immediately related to the fact which it states.

"Thine is the kingdom," is a statement that God is the rightful sovereign,—that he administers the kingdom,—and that all its resources and interests are his. The reference made to this fact affords special and evident support to the petition, "*Thy kingdom come,*" and to the corresponding petition of the second series, "*Forgive us our debts,*" for it is the part of a sovereign to forgive.

*And the power.*—While, on the ground of the atonement, forgiveness is mercifully granted by an act of sovereign will, in applying those blessings that are realised in the character there is an exercise of almighty power. And, from the place which these blessings occupy, and from the opposition to be overcome, almighty power must be exercised throughout in applying salvation.—(John iii. 3, 5, 6; Eph. i. 19, 20, ii. 4, 5, 10, iii. 16, 17, 20, vii. 10–12; 1 Pet. i. 5; 2 Pet. i. 3.) Here the power, of which the exertion is thus necessary, is ascribed to God. This ascription affords special support to the two kindred petitions, "*Thy will be done on earth, as it is in heaven,*" and "*Lead us not into temptation; but deliver us from evil.*" It is by the exertion of God's "*power*" that such a change will be wrought in the character of men generally that the former, and in our own that the latter desire will be fulfilled.

*And the glory.*—All the honour and glory that will accrue

from the bestowal of the blessings and the realization of the results prayed for, are God's by right, and will redound to him.—(Luke ii. 14; Eph. i. 6, 12; 2 Thess. i. 10, 12.) This statement, which, like those of the two preceding members, is at once an ascription of praise and an appeal, while specially connected with the view of God as a father, and with the allied petitions, presents a most powerful and the appropriate closing argument in support of all the petitions,—in support of them, both in our own hearts, as serving to impart greater earnestness to our desires and to confirm our expectation, and before God. It presents the issue to which all is to be referred, and in which all will be consummated.

*Amen.*—The meaning of this word is *true* or *truly*, but, occurring at the end of a prayer or an ascription of praise, it has the force of *so be it*.—(Rom. i. 25, ix. 5, xvi. 27; Rev. xxii. 21.) Here, accordingly, it has this force, and is thus a condensed reiteration of the whole prayer.

The Lord's prayer has been held to be unsuitable to the present circumstances of the church, as it is not made in the name of Christ. But we cannot regard this view as well-founded. When we are directed to pray to God as our father, we are directed to pray to him in the name of Christ; for it is only when we approach him in the name of Christ that we have access to him as our father. It would have been premature to give this direction expressly when the sermon on the mount was delivered; but the language employed was so chosen, that, when once its meaning was unfolded, it fully conveyed it.

As regards the confession of sin, which does not occur in the prayer in an expressed form, it is clearly implied in the petition for forgiveness, and in that for deliverance from evil. Indeed, the whole tone of the prayer is that of penitence and self-abasement. All that is asked is asked from God as a father—asked, not as deserved, but as needed, and, because needed, *not deserved*.

VER. 14, 15.—In our remarks on ver. 12 we have anticipated the exposition of this passage. In the reference of ver. 14, 15, to ver. 12, notwithstanding the intervention of ver. 13, there is nothing unusual. It may be observed, however, that the unforgiving cannot pray to God for any blessing; and thus a sincere allegation that we are not unforgiving must underlie every petition we address to him. It accordingly underlies the petition, "Lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil," and thus extends to the very close of the prayer. Ver. 14, therefore, refers to it quite naturally and justly as somewhat that immediately precedes.

We have *trespasses* here for *debts* in ver. 12, the former having been probably substituted the more effectually to exclude the idea of *pecuniary debts*.

VER. 16–18.—Fasting, our Lord's third instance of positive duty, is a practical acknowledgment that we have forfeited all things by sin, and is also fitted to diminish the obstruction which the body offers to the spiritual exercises of the soul. Of such significance, and serving such a purpose, it has necessarily retained its claims under the Christian dispensation. We find, accordingly, that the practice of it is recorded and commended in the New Testament.—(Acts xiii. 2, 3, xiv. 23; 1 Cor. vii. 5.) In our text our Lord recognises its obligation. It is, however, from its nature and design an occasional exercise, adapted to such circumstances as call for special humiliation before God.—(2 Sam. xii. 16; Neh. i. 4.)

The fasting here intended seems to be private fasting—"Thou, when thou fastest."—(Ver. 17.) But when the circumstances which call for fasting affect a body of men, say a community, it is the fasting of such community, as a community, that forms the proper response.—(Judges xx. 26; 1 Sam. vii. 6.)

*They disfigure their faces.*—The effect of this disfiguring

was that they were “of a sad countenance;” and our Lord prescribes as the opposite course that thou “anoint thine head and wash thy face.”—(Ver. 17.) We may therefore infer that the disfiguring in question consisted in assuming looks of sadness, heightened by the studied neglect of anointing and washing.

Referring the reader to what has already been offered on the first six verses of the chapter, we shall only further exhibit the structure of our passage :—

- A. | When ye fast, be not, as the hypocrites are, of a sad countenance : for they disfigure their faces,
- B. That they may appear unto men to fast.
- C. | Verily, I say unto you, They have their reward.
- A. | But thou, when thou fastest, anoint thine head, and wash thy face ;
- B. | That thou appear not unto men to fast, but unto thy Father which is in secret :
- C. | And thy Father, which seeth in secret, shall reward thee openly.

In A. we have the pharisaical mode of proceeding, and in A. the opposite mode of proceeding, which Christ prescribes ; in B., again, we have the aim, and in C. the issue of the former, and in B. the contrasted aim, and in C. the contrasted issue of the latter.

VER. 19, 20.—Here our Lord, still discriminating righteousness as regards the performance of positive duty, indicates the motive by which we should be influenced as sentient creatures.—(See Part III., sect. iii.) The process of laying up for ourselves treasures presupposes a corresponding estimate. Our hearts first prize and choose somewhat as our riches, our portion, and then what our hearts thus prize and choose we labour to acquire and accumulate, or to “lay up for ourselves.” Now, our Lord’s direction is, that the treasures which we lay up for ourselves be treasures not on earth but in heaven. To enforce this direction, he describes treasures on earth, in contrast with treasures in heaven, as

perishable and insecure. "Upon earth," all is perishable—"Where moth and rust corrupt;" and all insecure—"Where thieves break through and steal."

"Moth and rust," as agents of corruption, stand for all agents of this class. The word rendered *rust* means *eating*, *corrosion*, and thus *rust*, which is a form of corrosion.

*Corrupt. Cause to disappear, consume.*—It is used absolutely, for the fact stated is universal. Upon earth all things are subject to a law and a process of decay.

*Thieves break through and steal.*—This and other forms of violence and wrong prevail.

VER. 21.—(See Part III., sect. iii., par. 7.)—It may be thought that, though earthly treasures are perishable and insecure, we may in the meantime do what we can to lay them up for ourselves, and, when they fail us, then fall back upon heavenly treasures. This is a view on which men very generally proceed; it cannot, however, be carried out. If we make earthly things our "treasure," it is the state of our hearts that leads us to do so, for our treasure is just what our hearts choose. And, if our hearts choose an earthly, they will not, unless radically changed, choose a heavenly treasure. And it may be added, that while the state of our hearts determines the treasure we lay up for ourselves, the laying up of our chosen treasure reacts on our hearts. Our Lord here touches upon the momentous truth, that, whatever our outward condition may be we cannot be happy without a state of heart qualifying us for the enjoyment of our proper portion.

VER. 22, 23.—(See Part III., sect. iv., par. 1) The view presented in the last verse, that the heart can enjoy but one of two opposite portions, is here expanded, and illustrated in its expanded form. The heart, as presenting the object of pursuit, is to the soul what the eye is to the body—its "light." If it present but one,—and that it may present but one, it must present the legitimate,—object of pursuit,

the whole soul “shall be full of light,” as the whole body shall be if the “eye be single.” But if it present two conflicting objects of pursuit, an earthly and a heavenly treasure, the whole soul “shall be full of darkness,” as the whole body shall be if the “eye be evil,”—evil in regard to the particular quality now in question, that is, as not being “single,” as seeing double. Thus, when the heart is divided, the very light of the soul is darkness; and how great is such darkness! how certainly will it entail all the evils with which darkness is attended!

*The light of the body.*—Its lamp, that which gives light to it.

*Single.*—The connection, as we have endeavoured to show, requires that this, the proper, meaning of the word should be retained.

*The light that is in thee.*—All that thou hast for light, the light supplied to thee. Two cases are supposed. The second of these is, that the heart, as “the light” or lamp of the soul, presents to it two independent objects of pursuit, thus supplying it with a “light” which is really “darkness.” It is the spurious delusive “light” thus supplied to it that is here intended. The distinction to be thus made between that which gives light and the light which it gives is clearly presented in Luke xi. 36.

Our Lord here passes from the outward sphere of the illustration to the inward and spiritual sphere, in which the truth to be illustrated lies. And the force of the appeal which he makes is, “As, if thine eye be evil, thy whole body shall be full of darkness, so, if thine heart be divided, thy whole soul shall be full of darkness; it therefore behoves thee to guard against a divided heart, for if the light that is in thee be darkness, how great is that darkness!”

VER. 24.—(See Part III., sect. iv., par. 2.)—For the further elucidation of this verse, we need do little more than exhibit its structure:—

- A. | No man can serve two masters ;  
 B. | a. | For either he will hate the one,  
       b. | And love the other,  
 B. | b. | Or else he will hold to the one,  
       a. | And despise the other.  
 A. | Ye cannot serve God and mammon.

In A. our Lord asserts generally the impossibility of serving two masters; and, after justifying this assertion in B. and B., he repeats it in A. with respect to the particular case in hand. In B. he justifies the assertion on the ground that a servant cannot *feel* as he ought towards each of two masters, and in B. on the ground that he cannot *act* as he ought towards each of them. Here the important point is, that he would necessarily fail to serve one of them, either by not feeling (a.) or by not acting (a.) towards him as the relation requires; and this point is accordingly presented in the two extreme members of B. and B., this arrangement serving the same purpose as is served by the mention last in the preceding context of the effect that must follow if the eye be evil.—(Ver. 23.)

*Hold to the one, and despise the other.*—It is the manner of acting, or the practical procedure towards the one master and the other, that is described. He will “hold to the one,” be faithful and devoted to him, while he “despises the other,” or, rather, treats himself and his interests with neglect. Such neglect is the proper antithesis to devotedness; and, in 1 Tim. vi. 2, the verb here rendered *despise* expresses the contrast to “doing service.”

In the original the article before the second *one* is omitted, probably to intimate that the master first referred to as “the one” is not the master now intended. The servant will either “hate the one and love the other, or he will hold to the one,” namely, the one just referred to as likely to be loved by him, “and neglect the other.”

*Mammon.*—Riches. Augustine states that “in the CARTHAGINIAN language gain is called mammon.” It here denotes

riches or worldly possessions viewed as an idol, and personified. He who becomes the slave of worldly possessions exalts them to a place which a person only can reasonably and legitimately occupy. He makes them his god.

VER. 25-32.—In the preceding context it is shown that divided regards are impossible;—that we cannot lay up treasures for ourselves both in heaven and on earth;—that we cannot serve both God and mammon. On this fact our Lord founds the prohibition of our passage, “Therefore”—seeing it is so—“take no thought,” &c.

Earthly things derive their claims upon us from our bodily wants. It is in solicitude for the supply of these that our attention to them originates. And, therefore, to preserve us from an idolatrous attention to them, our Lord requires that we “take no thought for our life, what we shall eat, or what we shall drink, or for our bodies, what we shall put on.”—(See Part III., sect. iv., par. 3, 4.) And he enforces this requirement by various weighty considerations.—(See Part III., sect. iv., par. 5-8.)

Before we proceed to offer the few additional remarks on this passage that we deem necessary, we shall first unfold its structure :—

- |    |    |                                                                                    |
|----|----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| A. | a. | Therefore I say unto you,                                                          |
|    | b. | Take no thought for your life.                                                     |
|    |    | B.   Is not the life more than meat, and the body than raiment ? &c. (ver. 25-30.) |
| A. | b. | Therefore take no thought, saying, &c. (ver. 31.)                                  |
|    | a. | For after all these do the Gentiles seek.                                          |
|    |    | B.   For your heavenly Father knoweth that ye have need of all these things.       |

The prohibition in A. is reiterated in A., and enforced in B. and B. In a. the prohibition is based upon the implied fact, that, while we cannot serve God and mammon, to pursue the course prohibited would be to serve mammon; and in a. it is supported by the corresponding consideration, that to pursue the course prohibited is a heathenish procedure.

In B. the enforcement is derived from God's exclusive ability to sustain us in life (ver. 27, comp. ver. 25), and from his proved disposition to feed and clothe us; and in B. from the additional consideration of his perfect and uninterrupted knowledge of our necessities. The encouragement to cast our cares upon him is complete, when he is presented to us not only as able and disposed to relieve us, but also as every moment observing our circumstances with a father's care and affection.

B., though forming but one member in the parallelism now exhibited, consists itself of four members. The prohibition consists of two parts, being directed against taking thought for our life, what we shall eat, &c., and against taking thought for our body, what we shall put on. And accordingly the enforcement of it in B. divides itself into two branches:—

- c. Is not the life more than meat,  
d. And the body than raiment?
- c. Behold the fowls of the air, &c. (ver. 26, 27.)  
d. And why take ye thought for raiment? &c. (ver. 28–30.)

The prohibition of taking thought for our life is enforced in c. and c., and the prohibition of taking thought for our body in d. and d.

VER. 25.—*Take no thought.*—Distracting care or anxiety is meant. Forethought and providence are not forbidden here, and are elsewhere enjoined (Rom. xii. 17; 1 Tim. v. 8.) The attitude we must assume and maintain, if we would effect our escape from distracting care, we have endeavoured to indicate in Part III., sect. iv., par. 4. The middle path of duty in this case is prescribed in Phil. iv. 6,—“Be careful for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication with thanksgiving let your requests be made known unto God.” The exercise of forethought suggests requests, and by making these known unto God we escape distracting care.

*Life.*—That *life* is the correct rendering here is evident

from the direction which the prohibited anxiety would take —“what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink.”

“Is not the life more,” &c., is an argument *a majori*. He has given you that which is greater, shall he not give you that which is less?

VER. 26.—*Are ye not much better than they?*—Here he reasons from the less to the greater. He feeds the fowls of the air, and shall he not feed you, who are much better than they, and who at the same time are his children?—(See Part III., sect. iv., par. 5.)

VER. 27.—See as above, par. 6.

VER. 28.—*They toil not neither do they spin.*—They labour neither to procure nor to produce raiment for themselves.

VER. 30.—*Grass of the field.*—By referring them to this class, he indicates how inconsiderable they are.

VER. 32.—*Your heavenly Father knoweth.*—(See on ver. 8, p. 194.)

VER. 33, 34.—Having dissuaded us from setting our affection on things on earth (ver. 25–32), he here reiterates the direction of verses 19, 20, inverting, however, the order of the two branches of which it consists, for ver. 33 corresponds to ver. 20, and ver. 34 to ver. 19,—the arrangement thus adopted serving to indicate, that the leading object of this part of the sermon is, to recover or preserve from an undue regard things pertaining to the present life.

*Seek first.*—“Seek” as your treasure the full realization of “the kingdom of God,” and of its blessings and privileges. Seek this “first,” as being to you, as sentient creatures, the supreme object of desire and regard.

*His righteousness.*—We cannot understand here the righteousness spoken of in v. 6, 10, 20. That righteousness is not called “the righteousness of God.” It is to the righteousness which God has provided, and “which is by faith of Jesus Christ unto and upon all them that believe,” that this designation is applied.—(Rom. iii. 21, 22, i. 17,

x. 3; 2 Cor. v. 21; 2 Peter i. 1.) Righteousness as an attribute displayed in the divine procedure is intended in Rom. iii. 5, and probably also in iii. 25, 26. The meaning of the *righteousness of God* in James i. 20 is less obvious; but it does not there or elsewhere, and indeed cannot well, denote righteousness as realised in human character and conduct. The appended promise agrees well with the view which we take of the righteousness to be sought; for "the righteousness of God" received by faith forms a basis, and the only basis, for the bestowal of temporal things as covenant blessings.—(1 Cor. iii. 21–23; Rom. viii. 28–32.)

*Shall be added unto you.*—This promise presupposes forethought, and, by encouraging trust in God, preserves forethought from degenerating into distracting care. If we were wholly regardless of the future, such a promise would be inapplicable to our state of mind.

The import of the promise is, that when we "seek the kingdom of God and his righteousness," as the supreme and sole ultimate object of our desire and regard, all temporal things shall be superadded as may be best for us. Though they are not properly comprehended in the blessings of the kingdom, such a bestowal of them is comprehended in the process by which its blessings are applied.

VER. 34.—*Take therefore no thought.*—All these things shall be added unto you, "therefore," &c. Distracting care is altogether inconsistent with the position of the righteous as having such a promise.

*For the morrow.*—To-day appears to us as the present, with which we are actually dealing, and thus "the morrow" is the nearest future; yet even "for the morrow" we are not to "take thought." And our taking thought would serve no purpose, "for the morrow will take thought for the things of itself," and will not be moulded and fashioned by our thought-taking. The morrow is thus personified, and described, according to the appearance which it will present, as

determining its own aspect and history, and not receiving them from us—an appearance which the all-regulating providence of God will impart to it.

*Sufficient for the day.*—The personification seems to be continued. Each day has enough to do in caring “for the things of itself.” The adjective rendered *sufficient* is neuter, while the noun rendered *evil* is feminine. The cause of this difference of gender is to be found in the conception which the adjective is used to express,—the conception, not that its own evil is sufficient for the day *as an evil*, but that it is sufficient for it *as a thing* with which it is burdened, or for which it has to take thought. The literal rendering, therefore, is, *Its own evil is a thing sufficient for the day.*

*Evil.*—The word employed denotes more properly moral evil; here, however, it denotes physical evil, but physical evil, probably, viewed as a consequence of moral evil.

## PART IV.—(C.) VII. 1-20.

SECTION I.—RESUMED DISCRIMINATION OF RIGHTEOUSNESS AS  
REGARDS ABSTINENCE FROM WHAT IS FORBIDDEN.—(C. c.)  
VII. 1-6.

1. WHILE the illustrations employed by our Lord in discriminating righteousness are admirably fitted to serve the immediate purpose for which they are adduced, they serve, and designedly, we may safely conclude, the further but kindred purpose of exposing and correcting the most serious deviations of the prevailing practice and casuistry. The deviations of this kind, that involved a direct corruption or violation of the great and fundamental law of love, evidently claimed, and accordingly receive, special attention. Both the first and the last illustration, which our Lord adduces in discriminating righteousness as realised in conformity to prohibitions, bear upon this class of deviations.—(See Part III., sect. i., par. 7, 12-15.) In accordance with the estimate of their claim to attention which is thus indicated, his injunctions, reasoning, and remonstrance in our passage, in which he resumes the discrimination of that branch of righteousness (see Intro., sect. ii., par. 10, 11), are wholly confined to them.

2. From the fundamental character of the law of love (Matt. xxii. 37-40; Rom. xiii. 10), corruptions and violations of it demand the attention which is here given to them, and there was not a little in the case with which our Lord had to deal that imparted to this demand increased em-

phasia and urgency. Pharisaical externalism abolished the exercise, and would even cancel the requirement of love; and, while it thus indirectly promoted the prevalence of the opposite affections, it also excited and fostered them by its direct influence. Hence, in its bearing upon human life and intercourse, it would first substitute a counterfeit for the truly loving and brotherly, and then, failing or declining to maintain this semblance beyond certain limits, it would to a great extent either resort or give rise to the openly unloving and unbrotherly.

3. And there is no form of the unloving and unbrotherly to which it would more naturally or more certainly resort and give rise, than the form of it dealt with in our passage,—uncharitable and censorious judging. He who places his religion in mere external proprieties and observances, in which he deals with man and not with God, will easily attain to what he will regard as high and distinguished excellence, the contemplation of which will greatly inflame his unmortified pride. Occupying in his own estimation a very lofty eminence, he will look down upon others; and, guided in his judgment by his extravagant appreciation of himself, and influenced, perhaps unconsciously, by a desire to justify that appreciation, and by an unloving spirit, he will magnify and misinterpret their faults, and disparage, if not deny, their good deeds and qualities.

And, besides, our Lord's illustration and enforcement of the necessity of a searching scrutiny and careful discrimination of our abstinence from sin and performance of positive duty might, under the influence of a pharisaical bias, be so misunderstood and misapplied, that they should be made to authorise or countenance censorious judging.

4. When there is an outstanding visible blemish in our neighbour's character or conduct, we observe it as we observe anything else that is presented to our notice. The non-observance of it would indicate blindness, or want of discern-

ment, and not charitableness. But when we observe it, we may proceed variously with respect to it ; and one mode of procedure with respect to it is, to found upon it a sweeping judgment condemnatory of our neighbour. We do not judge in observing the blemish itself and pronouncing it a blemish, nor until we proceed further, and draw an inference from it unfavourable to the entire character of our neighbour. And it is when, under the influence of an unbrotherly spirit, we found such an inference on an insufficient induction, that we violate the prohibition of our passage.

When Peter denied his Master, he committed a most grievous sin ; and, if any of those who had heard his denial had regarded it as a grievous sin, they should not in doing so have been guilty of the judging here forbidden. But if, on the evidence afforded by that sin, they had pronounced him who had committed it an unregenerate, ungodly person, they should then have been guilty of such judging.

5. And, as is evident from this illustrative case, such judging may lead to totally erroneous results, and must therefore proceed upon an unsound principle ; and, when it leads to erroneous results, it inflicts great injustice on those towards whom it is exercised. It is thus in its own nature wrong. It was unnecessary, however, to urge this consideration ; it would present itself unurged. Christ, accordingly, presupposes the recognition of it, and proceeds at once to warn those whom he addresses, that by subjecting others in the manner forbidden, they exposed themselves, to condemnatory judgment—"Judge not, that ye be not judged ; for with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged."

6. Those whom God accepts, he accepts as being invested with the righteousness of Christ which is by faith, notwithstanding that there is much in their character and conduct that he condemns. He condemns their sins and their sinfulness ; and yet he does not condemn themselves, but views and treats them as made accepted in the beloved. This

is a glorious arrangement, at once righteous and gracious, bringing glory to God and salvation to man. It is in every way such an arrangement, that all should not only acquiesce in it and avail themselves of it, but should regard it with the highest admiration, and, when any regard it thus, and desire aright that God may proceed according to it in dealing with them, they will themselves study to proceed according to it in dealing with their fellow-men. We can never, indeed, with earnestness of spirit, expect that God in dealing with us will exercise attributes which we do not admire, and which we do not endeavour, because we admire them, as also on other grounds, to transfer into our own dealings with our neighbour. If we do not, as regards judging, therefore, proceed towards our neighbour, so far as this may be done by us and in our sphere, as God proceeds towards those whom he accepts in Christ, we do not really desire that he may proceed thus towards ourselves. If we pronounce an unfavourable judgment upon our neighbour, because we can discover sins in his life and blemishes in his character, our spirit and our attitude are such, that we do not and cannot really desire that God may accept us for the sake of Christ, notwithstanding our own unworthiness; and, therefore, he will not accept us thus, but will judge us according to our deeds. When we pronounce such judgment on our neighbour, we take our stand, by our spirit and procedure, on the deeds of the law; and God will, therefore, judge us and deal with us according to the deeds of the law. This we should deprecate, for, if the Lord mark iniquity, who shall stand? We should raise our souls to the cordial admiration of the gospel arrangement as regards judging, and we should mould our spirits into entire accordance with it.—“Judge not, that ye be not judged.” If we proceed otherwise, and found judgment rigidly on the deeds of the law, we subject ourselves to the same mode of judgment—“For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged.”

7. From judging our brother, our Lord passes to the somewhat different but kindred procedure towards him, of "beholding the mote that is in his eye." This procedure implies a close and prying inspection, for without such inspection a mote that is in one's eye is not beheld. And, when we narrowly inspect our neighbour's character, it will be found that we do not bestow any inspection on our own. On this fact our Lord founds the remonstrance, "Why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brother's eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye?" The only advantage to be gained by beholding blemishes is, that, beholding, we shall be the better able to correct them, and to prevent their evil consequences. But should it not be our first care to perform this office for ourselves? And, if we do not, while the blemishes of our character are great and glaring, take, by beholding them, the first step towards their correction, what can move us to take it on our neighbour's behalf, while the blemishes of his character are in comparison inconsiderable? The truth is, that, when we are more quicksighted to behold our neighbour's sins than to behold our own, it is not properly as sins that we view them, but as deeds that are discreditable to him; and our quicksightedness is exercised from a desire to find ground for disparaging and condemning him. Our Lord's question seems to glance at this motive.

8. Inconsistent as it is to be solicitous to pull out a mote out of a brother's eye, while we leave a beam in our own, still, if we behold the mote in his eye, we shall doubtless pretend that it is from such a solicitude that we behold it. But who does not see the absurdity of offering to our neighbour the benefit of a service which we are incapable of performing, until we perform for ourselves a similar service, still more needed in our case? "How wilt thou say to thy brother, Let me pull out the mote out of thine eye; and, behold, a beam in thine own eye?" To pull out a

mote out of a brother's eye, we should need to have good eyesight ourselves; but he that has a beam in his eye is blind.

And, further, while he that offers to pull out a beam out of his brother's eye acts as if he hated sin, and desired to effect his brother's deliverance from it, it is plain that he does neither, if he leaves a beam in his own eye. He is, therefore, a hypocrite. Our Lord accordingly addresses him as such, giving to him such direction as his hypocrisy renders necessary: "Thou hypocrite, first cast out the beam out of thine own eye; and then shalt thou see clearly to cast out the mote out of thy brother's eye."

9. There is, however, an opposite extreme, against which it is also necessary to guard,—the extreme of renouncing all discrimination, so as to "give that which is holy unto the dogs, and cast pearls before swine." If, when Peter denied Christ, those who were present concluded that he was not a believer, they should have been guilty of the judging condemned in our passage; but, if he had continued ever after to deny his Master, it would then have been no reprehensible judging to pronounce him an unbeliever; it would, indeed, have been no judging of any kind, but a mere statement of what had been witnessed. When we treat dogs as dogs, and swine as swine, we do not judge, we merely take notice of what we see, and proceed accordingly. He that refuses to do this, gives way to a sickly charitableness. If he is influenced by kindness to his neighbour, it is mistaken kindness; and he betrays a sad want of faithfulness to God and to his cause.

10. If we refuse or fail to discriminate, we shall expose both ourselves and all we should esteem as most precious to serious danger. When we do not regard and reprobate as evil, or, in other words, do not refer to its proper class, and treat according to its distinctive character, the evil we are compelled to witness and with which we have to deal,

we not only to no small extent make it our own—a most solemn consideration—but shall unavoidably be contaminated by it; and, besides, shall sometimes, perhaps often, afford it scope and advantage for exerting its malignant and destructive influence. Accordingly, in enforcement of the prohibition, “Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, neither cast ye your pearls before swine,” our Lord adds, “Lest they trample them under their feet, and turn again and rend you.”

SECTION II.—RESUMED DISCRIMINATION OF RIGHTEOUSNESS  
AS REGARDS THE PERFORMANCE OF POSITIVE DUTY—  
REFERENCE TO GOD.—(*C. d. e.*) VII. 7-12.

1. In the passage here resumed (vi. 1-18—See Intro. sect. ii., par. 11, 12), our Lord discriminates righteousness as regards the performance of positive duty,—one of his illustrations, the illustration on which he most insists, being derived from prayer. Having there shown what *kind* of praying is comprehended in the true righteousness, he here enjoins that *kind* of praying as a means of mighty efficacy and indispensable necessity in cultivating it. “Ask, and it shall be given you.” Those who are “created in Christ Jesus unto good works,” receive, in this great change, “the spirit of grace and of supplications” (Zec. xii. 10; Acts ix. 11, ii. 41, 42); and, at the same time, they are awakened to such a sense of their wants, and obtain such a discovery of the provision made for the supply of their wants and of the manner of applying it, that, while they have been enabled, they are constrained and encouraged to pray. And the exercise thus originated and necessary, they do not find unprofitable. It is in answer to prayer they are enlightened and strengthened to “walk in newness of life.”—(James i. 5; Eph. vi. 18, comp. 10-17; Ezek. xxxvi. 37, comp. 27.) And, while prayer is thus inseparably connected with the dis-

tinctive righteousness of Christ's subjects, both as an effect and as a means, it is also comprehended in it as an essential element. Prayer is the dutiful procedure on the part of believers, with whom alone we are here concerned, in reference to certain prominent and pervasive peculiarities of their condition and of the relations in which they stand to God.

2. Our Lord issues in our passage a threefold direction or injunction, "Ask—seek—knock." At present, however, it is only the first branch of this injunction, and the enforcement of it, that claim our attention.

Prayer has its origin in our wants; and hence it consists fundamentally in asking. Asking is its essence. It is quite in accordance, therefore, with our Lord's design of purging it and preserving it pure from all foreign admixtures, to enjoin it, as he does here, under the notion of asking—"Ask, and it shall be given you."

3. Asking—sincere *bona fide* asking—implies a sense of the presence and pressure of the evils under which we labour, an appreciation of the blessings of which we stand in need, and a discovery that it is glorifying to God to bestow those blessings,—this sense, appreciation, and discovery comprehending in them, or awakening the legitimate exercises of soul within their respective spheres. And, further, that there may be right asking, it must be known and believed that God offers and promises to bestow all that is asked.

Desire, accompanied by expectation, springing from the sources now indicated, asking is the expression of it.

4. In our passage our Lord promises that, if we ask, we shall receive. It is true, indeed, that we shall receive what we ask only when we ask things agreeable to the will of God; but, then, we never truly ask what is not agreeable to the divine will. It is by the Holy Spirit that we are led to the sense of present and the discernment of impending evil,—to the appreciation of needed blessings,—to

the discovery that it is glorifying to God to bestow those blessings,—to the believing recognition of his offer of them, and his promise to bestow them,—in short, to all the exercises of soul that result in asking, and that give to asking its true character; and, if the Holy Spirit conducts us to those exercises and the asking in which they result, it must follow, from the harmony of the divine designs and operations, that God will give us what we ask. Our asking may indeed be more or less specific; but, when it is most specific, our desires pointing distinctly to particular blessings, if it be real asking, we shall still receive what we ask.

5. The promise, “It shall be given you,” is founded upon the universal truth, that “every one that asketh, receiveth.” This is the law upon which God universally proceeds in dealing with our prayers,—if we ask we shall receive. When and so far as there is asking on our part, there is, ever and without fail, giving on his. We may seem to ask, and yet not receive; but we shall ever receive, when we ask in reality;—“Every one that asketh, receiveth.” This is the law,—the established order in God’s kingdom; and his testimony and his promises assure us that he will adhere to it. Those who ask are in Christ, and they appreciate and desire spiritual blessings. They are thus in such a position, relatively and morally, that the divine mercy may have free access to them, and it will accordingly be exercised towards them, and “supply all their need.”

6. From the fact that the blessings of the kingdom of heaven are so precious and altogether *such* blessings, that the bestowal of them displays amazing love and bounty, the apprehension may and often does arise, that God will not bestow them on vile and guilty rebels, for in this light those, whom a sense of their spiritual wants impels to pray, ever and justly view themselves. Great and precious, however, as the blessings to be obtained are, they are

only the "good things" we need. The question therefore is, have the righteous ground to expect that God will give good things to them? The answer to this question is easily deduced from the relation in which he stands to them as their Father. Even among men fathers are disposed, and are therefore used, to give "good" and not evil or useless things to their children. When a son applies for "bread," his father will not mock his wants by "giving him a stone;" or, when "he asks a fish," he will not disappoint and shock him by "giving him a serpent." Such treatment of a son, we at once feel, would be unnatural and monstrous,—a gross and unworthy violation of paternal duty. And shall we apprehend that God will give analogous treatment to his children? When men, though "evil, know how to give good gifts unto their children," shall not He much more fulfil the requirement of the paternal relation, by "giving good things to them that ask him?"

7. God being presented to us as the Hearer of prayer and the bountiful and gracious Giver of all "good things" in answer to it, it is our duty to maintain a similar character in our procedure towards our fellow-men. We desire good things for ourselves, and God, if we ask him, will give them to us; and admiring and following the example which he thus sets, we should give good things to others. In asking, we proceed upon the view that it is a Godlike manifestation of character to "give good things." And in giving, God justifies this view, and proclaims by his example the truth which it embodies. We thus underlie accumulated obligation to proceed upon it in dealing with our fellow-men. We cannot, indeed, as regards either the extent or the efficacy of our giving, give to them as we ask God to give to ourselves; but, virtually if not actually, we ask them also to give to us, and what we thus ask them to give we should render to them,—or, in other words, whatsoever we would that they, if in our circumstances, should, in the exercise

either of love or of justice, do to us if in their circumstances, we as matters stand should do to them.

SECTION III.—RESUMED DISCRIMINATION OF RIGHTEOUSNESS  
AS REGARDS THE PERFORMANCE OF POSITIVE DUTY—  
REFERENCE TO OUR HEAVENLY INTERESTS.—(*C. d. f.*)  
VII. 13-20.

1. There are multitudes, as is very evident, who do not "seek." They take no earnest step of any kind to secure the salvation of their souls. Others, again, "seek," but they rest in their seeking; they have no idea of "finding." Their seeking they believe will in some way be productive of advantage to them, but they do not expect that the resulting advantage will be realised in any decided or definite form in this life, or until they enter eternity. Hence their seeking is very vague and languid,—a sort of aimless hovering in the region of means, without ever reaching or striving to reach the ends and attainments which lie beyond. It is not such seeking that our Lord enjoins; what he requires is, that we seek with the earnest desire and with the expectation of finding. Accordingly, in the resumption in our passage of the command to "seek" in verse 7, he directs and enjoins that we take the final and decisive step, to which it is the proper design of seeking to conduct—"Enter ye in at the strait gate." That this command is a resumption of the command to "seek," may be inferred from one of the considerations by which it is enforced. The command to "seek" is enforced by the prospect of "finding" (ver. 8), and the command to "enter in at the strait gate" is enforced by the same prospect, as enhanced by the awful fact that "there are but few that find" (ver. 14). This view is also supported by the nature of the caution added to the injunction of our passage—"Beware of false prophets." It is to a person engaged in

“seeking” that the influence of such teachers would be specially dangerous. It is dangerous, indeed, throughout the whole Christian course, but it is so only in so far as the position occupied is that of persons engaged in “seeking,” or, which is fundamentally the same position, that of persons not finally decided and settled as to belief and practice.

2. In our natural state we are not subjects of the kingdom of heaven,—we have rebelled against its Sovereign, and are under sentence of banishment and exclusion from its territory and its privileges. In such circumstances, it behoves us to inquire, with the utmost promptitude and earnestness, how we may be again admitted among its subjects. To this inquiry the injunction of our passage supplies an answer—“Enter ye in at the strait gate.”

3. By “the strait gate” is intended the process of entrance into the kingdom of heaven or into a state of grace. This process must, evidently, comprehend the renunciation of the rebellion in which all are engaged in their natural state. And we do not renounce it by merely discontinuing it in outward conduct; we must deplore that we have been guilty of it,—that we have cherished the spirit and acted the part of enemies to God. It is only when we thus repent of it that we renounce it in our heart. But such renunciation is evidently a humiliating and painful exercise; and to enter by such an exercise into the kingdom of heaven, is to “enter in at a strait gate.”

Acknowledging the right of God to devoted and unblemished service at our hands, we must set ourselves to render such service to him,—to regard him with supreme love, and to constitute our lives such an expression of this love as he himself enjoins. But we shall no sooner attempt to enter upon this course, than we shall find that we are wholly unable in our own strength, either to renounce the attitude of rebels, or to assume the attitude of loyal subjects,

—to do ought that is truly good. By this discovery we shall necessarily be deeply abased and brought into a painful strait,—feeling the dutifulness and the necessity of those exercises of soul by which we should take our place among Christ's subjects, and, at the same time, finding ourselves utterly unable to attain to them, or to make any progress, however small, towards attaining to them. It is when we are in this strait, and brought to this distressing pause, that a saving change is wrought by divine grace, and we enter into the kingdom of heaven. Such being the manner of our entrance, it may justly be said that we “enter in at a strait gate.”

4. In this representation, we view our entrance into the kingdom of heaven under its moral aspect, or as a change of our moral character, bearing, and attitude. And we believe it is in this light it is viewed in the injunction of our passage; for righteousness is the subject of the sermon on the mount, and this injunction, accordingly, respects the practice and cultivation of righteousness. Our entrance into the kingdom of heaven, however, may be viewed also under a relative aspect, or as a change of our relative position; and viewed in this light it is effected by faith. Now, when we exercise the faith by which it is effected, we feel that we are guilty and exposed to deserved punishment, and that from the lost condition into which we are thus sunk we are utterly unable to deliver ourselves; and, renouncing therefore all self-confidence, and every plea and expectation derived from self-confidence, we cast ourselves upon the mercy of God, and plead the merits of Christ. And entering the kingdom of heaven thus, “we enter in,” it is evident, “by a strait gate.”

5. Such is “the strait gate.” And, having commanded us in the preceding context to “seek,” our Lord supposes that, having sought, we have found this gate, and here enjoins that we enter in by it.

To enforce this injunction, and engage us to obey it with prompt decision and energy, he urges several weighty considerations. The first of these is, that the strait gate is not the only gate,—that there is also a “wide gate,” opening on a broad way, that leads to destruction. This gate is so wide that we enter in by it without any determination, or effort, or self-denial, by simply yielding ourselves to the bent of our hearts and to the influence of circumstances,—so wide that we cannot but enter in by it, if we do not enter in by the strait gate. And, then, the way on which it opens is so broad, that no check will be encountered and no restraint experienced in pursuing it. The travellers may roam in every direction and to any extent—they may humour every fancy, they may indulge every taste, they may gratify every inclination, they may yield to every impulse, they may be extravagant or penurious, they may hoard or squander, they may struggle for superiority and power or they may be subservient sycophants, they may be proud and haughty or cringing and base-spirited, they may be temperate and chaste or they may be debauched and dissolute, they may be industrious or indolent, honest or dishonest, gay or austere; in short, they may be anything that any propensity, or habit, or influence may make them. And, still further, while the gate is wide and opens on a broad way, many “enter in thereat.” The danger arising from this fact is generally altogether disregarded, and almost always underrated. The prevalent belief is, that it matters little or none to us, so far as concerns our own safety, what spirit those around us manifest, or what course they pursue—that, however bad their example may be, we may without difficulty act, in the face of it, on our own convictions. Those who entertain this belief overlook the great delicacy of character—how easily its tone is vitiated and its beauty defaced. But what we have at present more particularly to observe is, that they overlook the great,

though often unobtrusive, power of example, which may be compared to that of the atmosphere we breathe. If the atmosphere be unwholesome, though it will not give a sudden shock to the health, it will gradually impair and undermine it in the case of the most robust. And evil example operates in a similar manner. We may not be suddenly drawn to copy it; but, when it is set by almost all, if we do not look upon it as a source of great danger and diligently counteract it, it will gradually tell upon us, relaxing our views, abating our conscientiousness, and corrupting our habits. It requires deliberate and resolute effort to do otherwise than others do.

6. That we may not, with the great multitude, enter in at the wide gate and walk in the broad way, we must comply with the injunction of our passage. We cannot be stationary. But, if we would comply with the injunction to enter in at the strait gate, we must bestir ourselves vigorously, or, as it is elsewhere expressed (Luke xiii. 24), we must "strive"—labour energetically—to pursue this course. From the straitness of the gate we cannot enter in without such labour.

7. When we have entered into the kingdom of heaven, we must proceed onward by the narrow way, which leads through its territory, as the kingdom of grace, to the consummated blessedness to be enjoyed in it as the kingdom of glory. This narrow way is the way of holiness; and we walk in it when we "cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God."—(2 Cor. vii. 1.) It is a narrow way as consisting of but one path, exactly determined by the will of God. There is no allowance of by-paths, no licence for detours and deviations, to meet emergencies or to humour inclination. There is but one sanctioned path, and all must walk in it always. And it contributes further to the narrowness of this way, that in walking in it we must be influenced by

one dominant motive and pursue one ultimate object,—whether we eat or drink, or whatsoever we do, we must do all to the glory of God.—(1 Cor. x. 31; Matt. vi. 4, 6, 18.) It is not enough that what we do is outwardly what he requires; we must do it with a supreme reference to him, and with a view to his glory as the great ultimate end we seek. The narrowness of the way on which the strait gate opens arises also, in no small degree, from the necessity of self-denial on the part of all who walk in it. Instead of indulging their depraved tastes and seeking to gratify their depraved inclinations, they must crucify the flesh with the affections and lusts. It must be their constant aim and strenuous endeavour to eradicate every disposition, and overcome and abolish every tendency, that withdraws from an undivided allegiance and exclusive devotedness to God.

8. If we would walk in a way marked by such peculiarities, and thus emphatically “narrow,” we must, it is evident, gird up the loins of our minds, and quit us like men. To walk in it is difficult; but, then, it leads “to life”—to all that is desirable as regards character, experience, and relative position; while the “broad way” that comes into competition with it, “leads to destruction”—to total and eternal perdition. And, oh! what a solemn consideration, that in the narrow way, which thus alone leads to life, but few walk, for there are but few that even “find” the strait gate that admits to it!

9. To the injunction of our passage, thus enforced, our Lord adds the caution, “Beware of false prophets.”—(Ver. 15.) This caution is peculiarly appropriate. The danger that men may not “find the strait gate,” and that, if they find it, they may not “enter in” by it, which is great under favourable circumstances, is fearfully increased by the influence of false prophets. And, even though the kingdom has been entered and the narrow way is pursued, their influence is still pernicious—obstructive of progress and of comfort.

10. Such prophets are represented as "coming in sheep's clothing" to those whom they seek to seduce,—that is, as coming to them with the mien of subjects of Christ's kingdom, while inwardly they are ravening wolves, desirous only to make a prey of the flock.

That we may detect them, notwithstanding their hypocrisy, our Lord directs us to observe their fruits. This direction has given rise to the question, Whether it is their teaching or their practice that is meant by their fruits? We apprehend that both may be meant,—only viewed in a particular light. When we speak of men's sayings and doings as their fruits, we view them in the light of their fitness to serve such purposes as are served by good fruit, which is agreeable to the taste and refreshing, and, in virtue of those qualities, brings profit to the proprietor; in other words, we view them as well-pleasing and glorifying to God and beneficial to man, or the contrary. Accordingly, when our Lord lays it down that we "shall know" false prophets "by their fruits," the meaning is, that we shall find their teaching and their practice to be neither glorifying to God nor beneficial to man; and that, on the ground that their fruit is thus evil, we are to regard and reject them as "false prophets."

11. To justify this test, he adduces the illustrative fact, that the fruit follows the nature and the quality of the tree. That it follows the nature of the tree is patent to all, for men do not gather grapes of thorns or figs of thistles (ver. 16); and it is testified by uniform observation that it follows the quality of the tree, for every good tree bringeth forth good fruit, but a corrupt tree bringeth forth evil fruit.—(Ver. 17.) And, from the law established in the case, it is impossible it should be otherwise—a good tree cannot bring forth evil fruit, neither can a corrupt tree bring forth good fruit.—(Ver. 18.)

The test which thus applies to trees applies also to pro-

phets. And, as men act on the conclusion to which the application of it leads in the case of trees, for in an orchard every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit is hewn down and cast into the fire (ver. 19), so we should act on the conclusion to which the application of it leads in the case of false prophets. Knowing them by their fruits, we should reject them.

When Christ warns us to beware of false prophets, and teaches us to distinguish them by their fruits, he seems to have in view the personal influence they might acquire over us, as coming to us in sheep's clothing; and requires that, instead of yielding to mere personal influence, we determine our reception of them wholly by their fruits.

#### SECTION IV.—DETAILED EXPOSITION.

VER. 1.—*Judge not, that ye be not judged.*—(See Part IV., sect. i., par. 4, 5.)—In the member of the sermon which is here resumed (C. c., v. 21–48), our Lord teaches that not only flagrant manifestations of an unbrotherly spirit (v. 21), but the very existence and therefore every manifestation of it,—instancing particularly the pronouncing of unbrotherly judgments (v. 22–24),—will be visited by God with condemnation and punishment; and here he commands us to abstain from unbrotherly judging that we may not be so visited. The connection thus determines the kind of “judging” intended.

Judging always originates either in dutiful love or in sinful hatred,—in love to righteousness and to those whose honour and interests are concerned in the maintenance of it, or in hatred to those who are judged, excited perhaps by the excellence of the character they exhibit or of the cause they have espoused, but, in whatever way excited, a sinful hatred. Judging as originating in the former is a high, and, in certain circumstances, an imperative duty (Deut. i. 16,

17, xvi. 18-20; 1 Cor. vi. 3-5; John vii. 24; Isa. v. 3); accordingly, it is judging as originating in the latter that is forbidden in our text. He that is prone to disparage and condemn, and therefore seizes on blemishes and deviations as grounds of disparagement and condemnation, is guilty of the unbrotherly judging here forbidden. Such a procedure cannot be intended, and is not fitted, to serve any purpose of love.

*That ye be not judged.*—See Part IV., sect. i., par. 6.

If God enter into judgment with us, accepting or condemning us according to our deeds, we shall not be justified.—(Ps. cxliii. 2, cxxx. 3; Rom. iii. 19, 20.) How greatly it concerns us, therefore, that he may not enter into judgment with us, or, as it is here expressed, that we “be not judged!” It is “judging” under its proper and unmodified character that, as sinners, we are concerned to escape, for, if we are subjected to such judging, we shall inevitably be condemned. The proper idea of “judging” is accordingly to be retained in our text.

VER. 2.—*For with what judgment ye judge, ye shall be judged.*—Here the fact is stated on which the preceding enforcement is founded. If, under the influence of an unbrotherly spirit, we condemn the *person* because there is somewhat in the *character* or *conduct* that must be condemned, the rule of judgment which we thus apply, the rule adopted under the covenant of works, will be applied to ourselves.

*With what measure ye mete, &c.*—This is a statement of the same truth in more comprehensive terms, which extend it to our entire procedure towards our fellow-men. In the preceding branch of the statement, the correspondence of God’s procedure towards us to our procedure towards our fellow-men is asserted with respect to judging; but here it is asserted as obtaining universally. It would appear, however, from Luke’s fuller report of this part of the

sermon (vi. 38), that the announcement, "with what measure ye mete it shall be measured to you again," is to be regarded as having reference more particularly, if not exclusively, to the acting of a *positive* brotherly part—to "giving." According to this view the enforcing considerations of the parallel member of the sermon (C. c., v. 21-48) are here reproduced, and, so far as regards the presentation of them, the parallelism fully developed. In v. 22 the prohibition of unbrotherly judging is enforced by the consideration, that all who are guilty of it "shall be in danger of the judgment, . . . of the council, . . . of hell-fire;" and here it is enforced by the corresponding consideration, that "with what judgment they judge, they shall be judged." Again, in v. 44, 45, the kindred requirement—the requirement of a positive brotherly procedure, (see Part III., sect. i., par. 14), is enforced by the consideration, that those who comply with it "shall be the children of their Father in heaven" (compare ver. 46), or, as Luke more fully presents it (vi. 35), that "their reward shall be great, and they shall be the children of the Highest;" and here it is enforced by the corresponding consideration, that "with what measure they mete," in their brotherly and bountiful doings, "it shall be measured to them again."

VER. 3.—*And why beholdest thou the mote, &c.?*—(See Part IV., sect. i., par. 7).—The procedure described is that of one *who is at pains* to "behold," and takes *deliberate* notice. That such is its character is evident from the inquiry respecting the motive of it, "*Why* beholdest thou?"

*But considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye.*—This fact proves that the "beholding" does not proceed from a right motive. We cannot be influenced by such a motive in "beholding a mote that is in our brother's eye," if we do not first of all "consider," closely and seriously, "the beam that is in our own eye." We cannot be honestly solicitous to remove a lesser evil that affects another, if we are not solicit-

ous to remove a greater and a more obvious and urgent evil that affects ourselves. Within the sphere of the brotherly relation—and it is to this sphere that our text applies—we have to do with the sins of our fellow-men as being hurtful to them,—a view of them presented by the illustration of a “mote in the eye;” and, dealing with sin as hurtful, what motive can we have for taking notice of it, when found in the case of others as a “mote in the eye,” if we take no notice of it when it is presented in our own case as “a beam in the eye”?

VER. 4.—*Or how wilt thou say to thy brother, &c.?*—(See Part IV., sec. i., par. 8.)—Here the significance of the illustration employed by our Lord is further developed and indicated. Sin, like a “beam in the eye,” has a blinding power; and, on the other hand, spiritual vision is a necessary qualification, if we would treat a brother aright with a view to his deliverance from sin.—(Ver. 5.) But he that allows sin in his own case, cannot for the time exercise, and, if he habitually allows it, he does not possess spiritual vision.

*Behold.*—The absurdity of the proposal is marked.

VER. 5.—*Thou hypocrite.*—The question in ver. 3 respects the motive of the procedure under consideration, and implies that the motive that was or would be alleged was not the actual motive. And what is there implied is here assumed, and forms the ground of the designation before us. (See as above.)

*First cast the beam out of thine own eye, &c.*—This injunction refers to the otherwise impracticable proposal of ver. 4.

VER. 6.—*Give not that which is holy unto the dogs, &c.*—(See Part IV., sect. i., par. 9, 10; Intro., sect. ii., par. 1.)—“The dogs” and “swine” represent those whom it is no unbrotherly judging to pronounce unrighteous; and the injunction of our text is, that we do not deal with such as if they were not unrighteous,—that we do not adopt towards them

any mode of procedure which it is not proper to adopt towards the unrighteous.

We question if “the dogs” and “swine” are to be regarded as representing two distinct types of character, such as the ferocious and the grovelling. Two illustrations are presented, that the distinctive peculiarity of the illustrated and prohibited procedure may be the more easily and fully discerned; and, general appropriateness being of course presupposed, the representatives of the unrighteous are such in each as its nature requires. It was necessary, in the first place, that they should be such as would appropriately represent the unrighteous, and not appropriated or appropriate representatives of a different or an opposite class; and then, further, that the representatives in each illustration should be such as would naturally combine with the other materials which compose it. The first of those conditions was fulfilled by the selection of “the dogs” and “swine,” and not of lambs, for example, to represent the unrighteous; and the second, by the selection of “the dogs,” to represent them in the first, and of “swine” to represent them in the second illustration.

*That which is holy.*—“Holy ~~flesh~~” (Hag. ii. 12; Lev. vi. 29, vii. 6) is evidently intended. Dogs are carnivorous animals; and sacrificial flesh is the holy thing for the giving of which to such animals there is a natural basis or reason. It is designated by its holiness alone, that the ground might thus be the more distinctly indicated on which it would be improper and incongruous to give it “unto the dogs.”

Within the sphere of the illustrated truth, “that which is holy” denotes all that God has *set apart* to the exclusive use of the righteous. The Lord’s supper, for example, is thus “holy.” It was not, indeed, instituted when the injunction of our text was issued; but this injunction is still in force, and applies to all that is now “holy.” It is true that, in “giving” the Lord’s supper, we are not required, for we are

unable, to proceed according to the state of men's hearts, but we *are* required to proceed according to their patent character, and to withhold it from "dogs."

*Your pearls.*—Here the ground for not giving is different,—not holiness, but preciousness, preciousness to ourselves. "Pearls" are valuable (Matt. xiii. 45, 46; 1 Tim. ii. 9), and it is to our own pearls that the prohibition applies. The experience of God's gracious dealings with the soul may perhaps be regarded as an instance of what is intended. This experience, which is as a pearl of great price to those who possess it, should not be related to such as would treat it as self-delusion and fanaticism. Christ, who is unspeakably precious to believers (1 Pet. ii. 4, 6, 7; Phil. iii. 7, 8), should not be set forth before those who blaspheme his name (Acts xiii. 45, 46, xviii. 6). What we thus withhold from unworthy treatment, we should be prompted to withhold by a high appreciation of it,—*"Lest they trample them under their feet."*

*Lest they trample them under their feet, &c.*—Our Lord here enforces the prohibitions of our verse; and, that we may understand his enforcement of them, we must view it in the light which the structure sheds upon it. The structure, then, is as follows:—

- A. Give not that which is holy unto the dogs,
- B. Neither cast ye your pearls before swine,
- B. Lest they trample them under their feet,
- A. And turn again and rend you.

This view of the structure we have already justified.—(Intro., sect. ii., par. 1.) We may now, therefore, proceed upon it, and, doing so, we refer the enforcement in *B.* to the prohibition in *B.*, and the enforcement in *A.* to the prohibition in *A.*

When "that which is holy" is described as "holy," a reason—the fundamental reason—is assigned why it should not

be “given unto the dogs;” and accordingly in the express enforcement of the prohibition of this disposal of it, a different and further consideration is urged, “Lest they turn again and rend you.” If we give “that which is holy” unto those whom the “dogs” of our text represent, we may find, sooner or later, that by the desecration we have afforded them an opportunity and an inducement to act in character towards us, and inflict evils upon us from which we should otherwise be secure. It is a shortsighted and dangerous, as well as a sinful course, to trample upon the appointment of God to conciliate the favour of man. “He that saveth his life shall lose it.”

Our verse prohibits, not figuratively, we apprehend, but analogically, the procedure intended. That procedure is analogous to the procedure expressly specified, and therefore, by prohibiting the latter, it prohibits the former, to which it is referred, not only by the force of analogy, but also by the scope of Christ’s discourse.

VER. 7.—*Ask, and it shall be given you, &c.*—(For the connection see Part IV., sect. ii., par. 1; and, for the import of the injunction and of the promise attached to it, par. 2-4.)—Our Lord had already directed how and what we should ask (vi. 5-15), and he now enjoins that we “ask” according to that direction.

*Seek, and ye shall find.*—(See Intro., sect. ii., par. 13; Part IV., sect. iii., par. 1, 2.)—“Seeking” is different from “asking.” It is not even the same act under a different aspect. We “ask” what is in the gift of another, in the hope that he will bestow it upon us; we “seek” what to us is lost, our position with respect to it being that we know not where it is, and are desirous to “find” it.—(Song of Sol. iii. 1-3; Luke xv. 8, 9, ii. 44-46.) The “seeking” enjoined is referred by the scope of the sermon, and by the connection (see as above), to the blessings and the blessedness of the kingdom of heaven.—(vi. 33.) When we be-

come earnestly solicitous with respect to these, we feel as if we knew not where or how they might be found; and thus our use of means to obtain possession of them acquires, to our own apprehension and in reality, the character of "seeking."

The "seeking" enjoined is of course right seeking; and to such seeking the promise of a successful issue is attached.

*Knock, and it shall be opened unto you.*—"Knocking" is a practical application to God, and waiting upon him, for admission into a state of privilege, security, and enjoyment.—(Ver. 21-23.) "The gate" that admits into the kingdom of heaven is open, though "strait." It is a gate at which, when we find it (ver. 14, 7, 8), we may at once "enter in."—(Ver. 13.) But there is also a door that is represented as being shut (Ps. cxviii. 19); and at this door we are directed to "knock," that it may "be opened to us," so that, entering in, we may "dwell in the house of the Lord, and still praise him."—(Ps. lxxxiv. 4, comp. cxviii. 19.)

VER. 8.—*For every one that asketh receiveth, &c.*—(See Part IV., sect. ii., par. 5.)—These declarations support the promises of the preceding verse. The force of them is, If you obey these injunctions, the promises attached to them shall be fulfilled to you, for, universally, he that asketh receiveth, &c.

VER. 9.—*Or what man is there of you, &c.*—The connection is, "or," passing from the uniform order of God's procedure in the case, and appealing in support of those promises to the conduct of men in analogous circumstances, &c.

While the analogical argument thus introduced supports the promises of ver. 7, it also meets the difficulty that might be felt in fully believing those promises and proceeding on them, from the greatness of the blessings to be obtained.—(See Part IV., sect. ii., par. 6.)

*What man.*—He puts it to them if a “man” could be found among them who would act in the manner indicated, appealing thus to their observation and to their consciousness of human nature.

*Will he give him a stone?*—The form of the question implies that a negative answer must be returned. To him that needs bread “a stone,” though it somewhat resembles “bread,” is useless; and he puts it to them if any of them, when his son applied to him for bread, would give him this *useless* rather than that “good thing.” In the construction we have an example of anacoluthon.—(See Winer, sect. 64, ii., sect. 61, 3.)

VER. 10.—*Or if he ask a fish, will he give him a serpent?*—“A serpent,” while it bears some resemblance to “a fish,” is both noxious and disgusting; and the point which our Lord refers to them is, whether any of them, when his son asked a “good thing,” such as “a fish,” would prefer to give him an evil thing, such as “a serpent.”

VER. 11.—The force of the preceding appeal is, What man is there among you—is there any—who would meet the application of his son for what is good by giving to him what is useless or hurtful? And on the negative answer to this appeal—the only answer that could be returned to it—the question now before us is founded.

*Evil.*—Men are “evil” because of natural depravity.—(Rom. iii. 9–12, &c.) The appeal in ver. 9, 10, is to their natural disposition, and here, accordingly, it is in respect of natural character that they are described as “evil.”

*Know how to give good gifts.*—In the cases put and in similar cases, men, though “evil,” are *taught* by their own hearts “to give good gifts to their children,” regarding the *goodness* of the gifts asked as a reason, not why they should withhold, but why they should give them.

*Your Father which is in heaven.*—God is presented here

in the light in which he is to be contemplated by those who pray to him.—(vi. 9; see on “Our Father who art in heaven,” pp. 208, 209.)

*Good things.*—The gift of the Holy Spirit is the all-comprehending gift, for he, once given, applies all the blessings of salvation. Accordingly, for the gift of “good things” in our text, the gift of “the Holy Spirit” is substituted in a parallel passage in Luke.—(xi. 13.)

*To them that ask him.*—Men have been represented as giving good gifts to *their children*, and the exact parallel here, accordingly, would be *God's children*. This mode of designating the persons intended would not, however, serve so well the purpose of the passage. That purpose is to afford them encouragement to ask; but, while asking is a proof of sonship, they may be able to view themselves as asking, when they cannot view themselves as the children of God, and, therefore, able to draw encouragement from an assurance that God will “give good things to them that ask him,” when they cannot draw encouragement from an assurance that he will give good things to his children. The spiritual exercises in which they engage are more patent to them than the spiritual relations in which they stand; they are conscious of the former, or discern them, while they only infer the latter.

VER. 12.—In vi. 14, 15, our Lord appends to the instructions with respect to prayer, which are resumed in our passage, an announcement founded upon the principle that we must do to men, as regards forgiveness, what we would that God should do to us; and here he appends to the resumption of them the kindred exhortation or injunction, that we must do to men, in all cases, what we would that they should do to us. The announcement and the injunction proceed alike upon the principle that we must do to men what we would should be done to us. There is the difference, that in the former what we would should be

done to us by God, and in the latter what we would should be done to us by men, is the standard prescribed to us. What we would, however, in the one case so corresponds with what we would in the other, that, as regards the principle involved, this difference is only apparent.

When we pray, we “would” that certain things should be done to us; and we carry this state of mind beyond our dealings with God,—we “would” that certain things should be done to us by men. Taking, then, as thus extended, the state of mind in which prayer originates and which it involves, our Lord requires that we act in accordance with it towards our fellow-men, regarding what we desire and claim as supplying the measure of what we should render. The claims of our fellow-men are identical with our own, and when, therefore, we prefer our own, we assert theirs.

*For this is the law and the prophets.*—So far as regards this particular point, the course enjoined is what the law requires and the teaching of the prophets inculcates.

VER. 13.—*Enter ye in at the strait gate.*—(See Part IV., sect. iii., par. 1-4, 6.)—The kingdom of heaven, as the kingdom of grace, is viewed as an enclosed territory, to which a “strait gate” admits; and the injunction is here issued to “enter in” to it by that gate. The view that it is into the kingdom of glory that we are commanded to enter is inadmissible. The entrance into glory is ministered by God (2 Pet. i. 11; Matt. xxv. 21), and not effected by man; and, hence, a command to effect it could not be given. We are commanded, indeed, to “lay hold on eternal life” (1 Tim. vi. 12); but “eternal life” is enjoyed in the kingdom of grace, and not only in that of glory,—it is enjoyed by all who have exercised a saving faith.—(John iii. 36; 1 John v. 13.) The view which we oppose is inadmissible on the further ground, that, after entering in at the strait gate, there is a “narrow way” to be pursued. This fact is distinctly indicated, for it is quite gratuitous to

hold that "the gate" is mentioned first, not because in pursuing the course prescribed we come to it first, but because it forms the principal idea. And, while "the gate" is mentioned *before* "the way," "the way" is represented as "leading" not to "the gate" but "to life."

*For wide is the gate, &c.*—(See Part IV., sect. iii., par. 5.)—The command to enter in at the strait gate is here enforced by the twofold consideration, that there is much to withhold and seduce us from obeying it, and that, if we do not obey it, we shall perish. Our Lord combats the prevailing idea of a "wide" and easy entrance into his kingdom. There is, indeed, such an entrance, but it is the entrance, not into his kingdom, but into the kingdom of darkness. It is into this latter kingdom that those have entered that have entered in at the "wide gate." At the same time, from its very *wideness* men inevitably enter in at this gate, if they do not bestir themselves to enter in at the strait gate; or, rather, they have already entered in at the wide gate, and, until they enter in at the strait gate, incessantly confirm and virtually repeat the fatal step.

*That leadeth to destruction* refers to the *way*; at the same time, this description of the *way* serves also to characterize the gate that opens on it. *Go in thereat*, again, refers to the gate; a reference which becomes easy and obvious, when the introverted arrangement of the clauses is recognised :—

- A. | Wide is the gate, and
- B. | Broad is the way,
- B. | That leadeth to destruction, and
- A. | Many there be which go in thereat.

VER. 14.—*Because strait is the gate.*—The enforcement is still continued. The duty enjoined is that of "striving" to enter in (Part IV., sect. iii., par. 6), and the necessity of striving is here indicated. It is also intimated that it is only by entering in at the strait gate that we can enter

into the kingdom of heaven. Greater intensity is imparted to this view by the additional statement, "Narrow is the way." The word rendered *narrow* presents the idea not of narrowness simply, but of narrowness produced by *pressure*. And such exactly is the narrowness which obtains in this case. The way intended is not in its own nature narrow; it is only rendered narrow by the circumstances under which it is pursued. Hence, if we view it in one light it is easy (Matt. xi. 29, 30), while, if we view it in the different light in which it is here and elsewhere viewed (Col. iii. 4; Acts xiv. 22; Matt. xvi. 24, v. 29, 30; Rom. vii. 14–24), it is difficult to walk in it.

*Unto life*.—"Life" in its highest and consummated form is intended.—(Matt. xxv. 46, xviii. 8, 9; John v. 29; Rom. v. 17, comp. 21.)

*Find it*.—Not only are there but few that "enter in at the strait gate," there are but few that even "find it."

Here the arrangement of the clauses is the same as in the preceding verse :—

A. | Strait is the gate, and

B. | Narrow is the way,

B. | Which leadeth unto life, and

A. | Few there be that find it.

VER. 15.—*Beware of false prophets, &c.*—(See Part IV., sect. iii., par. 1, 9.)—The "false prophets," or *pseudo-prophets*, are so designated, not because they *lie* in their prophesying, but because they *lie* in professing that they are prophets. Prophets, as is evident from the books of Scripture that were written by prophets, exercised the function of teaching as well as that of foretelling future events. And the prophets of the early period of the New Testament dispensation were more particularly (1 Cor. xiv. 24, 25, 29–32; Eph. iii. 5, iv. 11, 12; 1 John iv. 1–6), though not exclusively (Acts xi. 27, 28, xxi. 10, 11), distinguished by the exercise of the former function as it was

exercised by Old Testament prophets; that is, under the guidance of inspiration and in execution of an extraordinary commission. It is evident, from the connection, that it is to the teaching of pseudo-prophets that the caution before us specially refers.

*In sheep's clothing.*—(See Part IV., sect. iii., par. 10.)—Neither the language itself nor the connection will permit us to understand by *sheep's clothing* clothing of sheep skins. It has been urged in support of this interpretation, that prophets were accustomed to wear such clothing, and that the false prophets are represented as wearing it to denote that they assumed the outward appearance of prophets. It does not seem, however, that there is any sufficient ground for regarding such clothing as in any way distinctive of prophets; and, besides, we apprehend it could not be called "sheep's clothing." Though the skins of sheep may be called their clothing, we doubt if garments made of their skins could be so called in serious discourse. It would be necessary, we conceive, to justify this designation, that the skins were in the same relation to the prophets as clothing in which they were to the sheep. But, independently of this objection, the interpretation which we oppose is inadmissible. The inward character of the "false prophets" is contrasted with the outward appearance which they assume. In respect of the former, or "inwardly, they are ravening wolves;" while in respect of the latter, or judging, so to speak, by the garb they wear, they are "sheep." Thus *sheep* is used figuratively to denote Christ's true subjects; and to "come in their clothing" is to simulate their character. It seems surprising that it should be regarded as creating any difficulty, that it is the character of the "sheep," or of Christ's true subjects generally, and not the character of prophets, that, according to this view, the false prophets are represented as simulating; for this is, clearly, the first and chief mode of deception to which such prophets would

resort. Until they first passed themselves for “sheep” they could not pass themselves for prophets; and, on the other hand, if they once raised themselves to high estimation as “sheep,” it would be comparatively easy for them to secure the admission of their claims as prophets.

False teachers are represented as “ravening wolves,” because they make a prey of the flock, and, by the means which they use for this purpose, kill and destroy.—(John x. 10; Acts xx. 29, 30; 2 Cor. xi. 22, xii. 17, 18; 2 Tim. ii. 17, 18.)

VER. 16.—*Ye shall know them by their fruits.*—(See as above.)—It is when we apply the test of suitableness for use, and not from any absolute consideration of their properties, that certain fruits, such as “grapes” and “figs,” come to be distinguished as “good;” and, in like manner, it is when we apply the analogous test of suitableness to serve the great ends to be sought in human activity,—the glory of God and the welfare of man,—that certain forms of human activity or certain elements and manifestations of human character, come to be distinguished, not simply as good, but as “good fruit.” The reference to the ends to be served, on which this distinction is thus founded, is clearly indicated, when those who are united to Christ are represented as “bringing forth fruit unto God” (Rom. vii. 4); that is, as glorifying God by “serving in newness of spirit.”—(Ver. 6.) According to this view, what our Lord lays down is, that, to “know” false prophets, we need only mark the bearing of the spirit they manifest and of their course,—of all they *bring forth*, whether in the form of deeds, or of doctrines, or in whatever other form,—on the glory of God and the welfare of man. When we find that it is not these but other ends they seek, or that it is not these but other ends their procedure is fitted to promote, we have ample ground for pronouncing them “false prophets.”

*Do men gather grapes of thorns? &c.*—(See Part IV., sect. iii., par. 11; and Intro., sect. iii., par. 16.)—This question, which has the force of an emphatic negation, justifies the test supplied in the preceding clause. The fruit follows the nature of the tree. But, while this law operates universally, it is sufficient for our Lord's purpose to obtain a recognition that it operates so far that "men do not gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles;" for it would be quite such an extreme case as this, if "false prophets" brought forth "good fruits."

"Thorns and thistles" grow under the blighting influence of the curse (Gen. iii. 17, 18), and are the very emblems and badges of barrenness; and the force of the question before is, that until, notwithstanding, men gather the very best fruits—grapes and figs—of them, false prophets shall not bring forth good fruits.

VER. 17.—*Even so every good tree, &c.*—The preceding question implies a forcible declaration of the fact, that "men do not gather," &c., but gather each kind of fruit of the tree whose nature it is to bear it; and here it is further declared, that, as the fruit thus follows the nature, "so" it follows the quality of the tree.

VER. 18.—Nor can it be otherwise. The fruit necessarily follows the quality of the tree.

VER. 19.—Here our Lord sets forth the treatment given to "every tree that bringeth not forth good fruit," with the view, we conceive, of indicating that there should be no shrinking from the most decided rejection of "false prophets;" and that, whatever indulgence a sickly, unfaithful charitableness may extend to them, God will visit them with just severity.

The statement serves also to show that the fullest confidence is universally placed in the test which he supplies.

VER. 20.—*Wherefore, &c.*—Our Lord here infers the rule, which he laid down in ver. 16, from the preceding vindication and establishment of it.

## PART V.—(B.) VII. 21–23.

## SECTION I.—BLESSEDNESS ATTACHED TO RIGHTEOUSNESS.

—(B. *a.*) VII. 21.

1. THE kingdom of heaven, taken in its whole extent, comprehends the kingdom of grace and the kingdom of glory.—(See Part I., sect. ii., par. 5, and on “kingdom of heaven,” pp. 55, 56.) Each of these, however, is called the kingdom of heaven; and it is to the latter of them that this name is given in our passage. We are led to this conclusion by the time of entering into it, which our Lord indicates—“in that day” (ver. 22)—that is, in the day of final retribution, which is often referred to as “that day” in the Scriptures (Luke x. 12, xxi. 34; 2 Tim. i. 12, 18, iv. 8), and which is evidently intended here, for on the day here intended Christ will pronounce judgment on the wicked—“Depart from me, ye that work iniquity,” and the righteous shall enter “the kingdom prepared for them.”—(Comp. Matt. xxv. 34, 41–45.)

It is also observable that, before the entrance into the kingdom of heaven intended in our text takes place, the “will of God is done” (ver. 21), but his will is not done until the entrance into the kingdom of grace takes place.

2. We regard our passage as a resumption or continuation of the third branch of the injunction in ver. 7, “Knock, and it shall be opened unto you.” The design of the “knocking” there enjoined is, to gain admission to the blessedness of heaven—admission, in the meantime, to the foretastes of it that may be enjoyed here, being of course included.—(See

on "knock," ver. 7, p. 256); and in our passage our Lord rejects, as wholly unavailing, the pharisaical substitute for the "knocking" intended—"Not every one that saith unto me, Lord, Lord, shall enter into the kingdom of heaven" (see Intro., sect. ii., par. 4), and, indicating the nature, asserts the sufficiency of that knocking—"But he that doeth the will of my Father which is in heaven." In ver. 22, 23, which shall forthwith claim our attention, he asserts the necessity of it.

It may be thought that knocking for admission to the blessedness of heaven would be premature and out of place until we reach the confines of eternity. The righteous, however, should all along, and, in point of fact, they do all along, earnestly desire that blessedness. Their desires do not terminate or find their ultimate object in the removal of present evils and the supply of present wants, but stretch onward from present benefits to the future consummation. They do not deal with the present only, but, in dealing with it, aspire after, and pant to realise the glorious future that awaits them. They are saved by hope. While they walk in the narrow way of the kingdom of grace, they long for the blessedness of the kingdom of glory.

3. Our Lord, in the announcement that those "who do the will of his Father which is in heaven," and these only, "shall enter into heaven," sets forth the inseparable connection of blessedness with righteousness; and the language which he employs seems to indicate the principal elements of this connection. God "is in heaven," and all who enter into heaven dwell, and have unceasing and close communion, with him. For this communion, and for deriving blessedness from it, those who do his will are qualified (see Part II., sect. i., par. 2); and God exalts them to communion with himself and to the blessedness which flows from it, thus graciously rewarding their obedience (par. 3), and testifying his approbation of it (par. 4.)

## SECTION II.—BLESSEDNESS ATTACHED TO RIGHTEOUSNESS ONLY.

—(B. b.) VII. 22, 23.

1. While “to him that knocketh it shall be opened,” it shall be opened to him only that knocketh ; or, to drop this figurative phraseology, as Christ does in our passage, while “he that doeth the will” of God “shall enter into the kingdom of heaven,” he only shall enter into it. That its gates may be opened, and that an entrance into it may be ministered, there must be knocking, or such doing of the will of God as constitutes knocking,—the doing of it under the influence, though not exclusively, of an earnest desire to be admitted into his presence in heaven, and to full, eternal, and beatific communion with him there.

2. It does not, therefore, by any means follow, though we acknowledge in words, or by the profession we make, that Christ is Lord, however loud and emphatic that acknowledgment may be, that we shall enter into heaven. Such acknowledgment is indeed a duty, and, as circumstances call for it, must be made ; but, if it be “alone” (James ii. 17),—if it be not carried out and embodied in a corresponding practice,—it is not an honest and truthful acknowledgment, and is therefore worse than worthless.

3. Neither does it follow that we shall enter into heaven, though we outwardly attach ourselves to Christ, and employ ourselves in his service, according to the gifts and talents entrusted to us. Though, for example, endowed with miraculous gifts, we “prophesied in Christ’s name, and in his name cast out devils, and in his name did many wonderful works,”—in all this there might be nothing, and if “alone,” there would be nothing, of the “knocking” with which admission into the kingdom of heaven is connected.

Gifts, whether miraculous or ordinary, do not imply grace. They may be possessed in any degree, and may be fully

exercised, while there is a total destitution of grace. Balaam possessed the gift of prophecy (2 Pet. ii. 15, 16; Num. xxiii. 5); the spirit of prophecy fell also upon king Saul (1 Sam. x. 10, xix. 23, 24); and the power of working miracles seems to have been conferred upon Judas, for Christ, in first sending forth the twelve during his own ministry, empowered and commanded them, and therefore empowered and commanded Judas, who was one of them, to "heal the sick, cleanse the lepers, raise the dead, cast out devils."—(Matt. x. 1, 4, 8.) And, of course, mere natural endowments and providential allotments do not imply grace. A man may possess a powerful intellect, a fine imagination,—the whole circle of his faculties may be of the highest order, and he may, at the same time, possess the advantage of exalted rank and of great power and wealth,—and yet be without grace.

And, further, a man may use gifts, and endowments, and providential allotments in the name of Christ, and his using them thus may be no more than a mere hollow profession. The reference to the name of Christ, that is, a matter of mere outward arrangement and declaration, is of no value because it is not sincere; the true reference to it results from faith and devotedness. I may understand that certain things are required by Christ, that he has given them a place in the service to be rendered to him by his subjects, and a bearing upon the ends to be sought by them; and, understanding this, I may do these things in the name of Christ, professing obedience to him, trust in him, and attachment to his cause; and yet, in doing them, I may be only adopting a certain external procedure, without the inward exercises and affections it should embody and express. And, as admission into heaven is not connected with mere saying and seeming, with mere outward profession and outward services, neither is it connected with inward sentiment, and ruminations, and fervour. It is not connected with anything partial, whether external or internal;

it awaits those only who do the will of God, taking it in its whole length and breadth, and in its whole height and depth.

SECTION III.—DETAILED EXPOSITION.

VER. 21.—*Not every one that saith unto me, &c.*—(See Part V., sect. ii., par. 2.)—Our Lord's object in those words is to specify, not a procedure that excludes from heaven, but a procedure to which, viewed by itself, admission into heaven is not attached. The procedure which he specifies is that of calling him Lord; and he announces that of those who adopt this procedure not every one shall, though some may, enter into the kingdom of heaven.—(See Winer, sect. xxvi. 1, on the rendering "not every one.")

*Lord.*—The reason why of those who say to Christ, Lord, Lord, "not every one shall enter into heaven," is to be found, not in *what* they say, but in the fact that some of them *only* say it, and do not act accordingly. What they say is what they ought to say; they are not at all at fault in saying it. Accordingly, the title they give to Christ must be understood in the highest sense in which it is applicable to him, or as expressing all that is true of him, viewed in the particular light in which it presents him. If they gave it to him in a lower sense as his highest title in the direction in which it points—and it is as his highest title in that direction that they are contemplated as giving it to him—they would *all* be at fault in what they say, and not merely *some* of them, as the antithesis requires, in only saying it.

*Lord*, taken thus in the highest sense in which it is applied or applicable to Christ, designates him as supreme Ruler,—necessarily such as God (Rom. ix. 5; Heb. i. 8), and such as Mediator by special appointment and gift (Ps. ii. 6; Eph. i. 20–22; Phil. ii. 9–11.)

We are not to measure the significance of this term as here

used by the intelligence of those addressed, but by Christ's knowledge of his own claims. Christ is Lord in the high sense just indicated, and from this fact a twofold duty springs,—the duty of acknowledging him, in words and by the profession made, as being Lord in that high sense, and the duty of doing his will. Now, the force of the language under consideration clearly is, that not every one that fulfils the former branch of this twofold duty shall, &c.

The apostle may seem to contradict the declaration of our text, when he gives the Corinthians "to understand that no man can say that Jesus is the Lord, but by the Holy Ghost."—(Cor. xii. 3.) In our text, however, our Lord takes all the instances of men's addressing him in the manner specified; in some of these there is an utter want of heartiness and sincerity,—it is but the lips that honour him; and therefore he declares that "not every one that says unto him, Lord, Lord, shall enter," &c. The apostle again speaks of a sincere and thorough acknowledgment "that Jesus is the Lord,"—an acknowledgment made not partially, as with the lips, but by the whole man. The difference between the two passages, stated under its general form, is, that the language of the one—our text—is *historical*, and that of the other *doctrinal*. Looking at facts as they present themselves to us outwardly, there are those who say to Christ, Lord, Lord, but of these not every one addresses him thus from the heart, and therefore not every one of them shall enter into the kingdom of heaven. But again, taking the acknowledgment of Christ as the Lord in its full extent, the true and not a mere seeming acknowledgment of him as the Lord, no man can say that he is the Lord but by the Holy Ghost, and every one that makes this acknowledgment shall enter into heaven.

Of the difference now indicated, as sometimes obtaining between a historical and a doctrinal statement, an illustration is afforded by Acts viii. 13, compared with John iii. 36, and by similar passages. In John iii. 36 we have the impor-

tant doctrinal statement, “He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life;” and in Acts viii. 13 we have the historical statement that “Simon himself believed also;” and yet, at the time, this Simon was “in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity.”—(Ver. 23.) He believed, however, after a sort; and the historical statement of what he did, simply presents the fact that he believed, without in any way determining the distinctive character of his believing. But the doctrinal statement sets aside all that is partial or only apparent, and recognises only true and thorough believing—saving faith.

The basis of the difference in such cases between the language of historical and that of doctrinal statement, is the fact that over against spiritual acts there are natural acts of the same general character, and that bear the same name; and sometimes, while in doctrinal statements the former are intended, the latter are intended in historical statements.

*But he that doeth the will, &c.*—The latter as well as the former branch of the twofold duty of acknowledging Christ and doing the will of God must be fulfilled; and, indeed, if the former branch of it be fulfilled in sincerity and truth, and not in hypocrisy only, the fulfilment of the latter branch of it must follow. It is observable, however, that our Lord, in characterising those who shall enter into heaven, does not describe them as doing his own, but as doing his Father’s will. This latter mode of description was in every respect better fitted to serve the purpose which he had in view. It effectually discountenanced the expectation,—which the former mode of description might seem to encourage,—that he came to destroy the law, and would therefore minister to the subjects of his kingdom an entrance into heaven without conformity to it. At the same time, the phraseology which he employs—he that doeth the *will of God*, not he that obeyeth *the law*—is free

from every element that could impart to it, more or less, a special reference to the existing economy. And while, consequently, it could not be regarded as intimating either the continuance or the discontinuance of the peculiar institutions and rites of that economy, it could not easily be understood in conformity with the prevailing externalism.

*Of my Father.*—It could be no part of his design to set aside his Father's claims.

*Which is in heaven.*—How could any one expect to enter into heaven, who disobeyed God, "who is in heaven?" God, however, "will bring with him" into heaven all "who do his will." The principle of obedience prompts those in whom it operates to seek communion with God. Their obedience is a "knocking" for admission to communion with him; and "it shall be opened to them."

VER. 22.—*Many will say to me in that day.*—(See Part V., sect. i., par. 1.)—The expectations with which the persons intended pass on to eternity and the judgment-seat, and which "in that day" will terminate in final and fearful disappointment, are here described with dramatic vividness. To indicate the confidence of their expectations they are represented as appealing to the judge himself.

*Lord, Lord, have we not prophesied in thy name? &c.*—This is their appeal; and they urge in it that they not only said to him, Lord, Lord, as they now and still do, but added to this acknowledgment the working of great and varied miracles "in his name." Still admittance will be refused to them.

The name, say of a person, presents him as an individual, and in respect of all that he is as an individual, and not under a more general and less definite aspect as a member of a class.—(See on "Hallowed be thy name," p. 210.) Accordingly, to "come in my own name" is to come presenting myself or what I am myself, and to "come in the name" of another is to come presenting that other,

and as it were enveloping and concealing myself “in” this presentation of him, so that I do not at all appear personally, but only, according to the nature and under the limitations of the case, as his agent, instrument, or substitute.—(John v. 43.) Then to act in the name of another is to act as occupying the position which I take when I come in his name,—presenting him, and not myself, as possessing and exercising the authority, power, right, &c., exercised in the case.—(John x. 25; Mark ix. 38.) It is with the view of thus presenting Christ, and receding himself under the cover of his “name,” that, for example, the apostle Peter, in Acts iii. 6, prefaces the call which he addressed to the lame man on whom the miraculous cure there related was wrought, with the words, “In the name of Jesus Christ of Nazareth.” By those words he presents Christ as, if we may so speak, his *principal*—the sole source of power and dispenser of healing in the case, and takes his own proper place as Christ’s instrument. In the passages to which we have hitherto referred the preposition *in* is used, but in our text we have the dative without the preposition. The import of this latter modification of the formula may be learned from the language employed by the apostle, in correcting the view of the miracle wrought on the lame man which the people were disposed to take,—“His name, through faith in his name, hath made this man strong.” According to this account, the presentation of Christ, operating through the faith with which it was received, was the means of making the man strong, and the apostle might be said to have wrought the miracle by it—“by the name of Christ.” Such, we apprehend, is the view of the relation of the name of Christ to the miracles wrought in his name, on which the modification in our text of the formula under consideration is founded, or which it is intended to convey. Understood thus it is peculiarly appropriate here, as connecting, like the kindred language of Peter, the miracles referred to closely

and exclusively with the name of Christ, and thus making the utmost of the fact that they had been wrought, as a ground for the claim of those who had wrought them to be recognised as his servants.

It is from their anxiety to make good their claim, or to strengthen their plea, that the evidently studied repetition of "by thy name," and the precedence which those words take in each clause, are to be accounted for. The questions of their appeal seem to imply that they were already disowned, and to be expressive of their consequent surprise and disappointment, as if they should say, Can it be so? Did we not? &c.

*Prophecy.*—(See on "False prophets," p. 261.)

*Cast out devils.*—"Demons." The Scriptures speak of but one *devil*, though of many *demons*.—(See Campbell on the Gospels,—dissertation on this and the kindred terms.)

*Many wonderful works.*—"Mighty works." They abandon the attempt to specify them, thus conveying the idea that they were very numerous.

VER. 23.—*And then will I profess unto them.*—Many who not only said to Christ, Lord, Lord, but wrought miracles by his name, are represented as inquiring, when they perceive the judgment taking that direction, if he indeed disowns them. This inquiry under ordinary circumstances would imply that to disown them would be wrong. The term which Christ employs in describing the answer he will give them is adapted to such an inquiry—"I will profess," or "acknowledge," &c.

*I never knew you.*—The simplest and, we think, the correct interpretation of "knew" is, I never knew you as sustaining the relation to me which you claim;—you profess to be subjects of my kingdom, I never knew you as such. The usual interpretation, however, is, that "knew" denotes here, as this verb sometimes does, knowing with a knowledge accompanied by approval and love. This accessory

idea is substituted for the primary and fundamental one in the antithetic statement of the Psalmist—"Though the Lord be high, yet hath he respect unto the lowly; but the proud he knoweth afar off."—(Ps. cxxxviii. 6.) The contrast requires that we understand the first branch of this statement, "He hath respect unto the lowly," as denoting that the Lord *knoweth* the lowly in a peculiar manner, which the language employed is intended to indicate, that is, with approval and friendly regard. Knowledge is in every case the basis of love; and the qualities that are fitted to excite love being supposed on the one side and sympathy with them on the other, love will become more ardent as knowledge increases. There arises also, from the nature of the case, a disinclination to know but with the view of loving; and hence spontaneous and, if we may so speak, aggressive knowing—knowing which results from a spontaneous proceeding or going forth, as it were, to know, properly implies love. Thus the idea of love would come quite naturally to be included in some cases in the meaning of the verb under consideration. But, whatever may be the explanation of the fact, it *is* sometimes included in it.—(Amos iii. 2; John x. 14, 15; 2 Tim. ii. 19.)

*Never.*—They refer in their appeal to certain occasions—"Did we not," &c.; and the force of "never" is, neither on these nor on any other.

*Depart from me, ye that work iniquity.*—On the negative ground, that he knew them not, they must be excluded; but on the positive ground, that they are workers of iniquity, they shall be visited with positive punishment. The full import of the sentence, "Depart from me," is unfolded in Matt. xxv. 41.

## PART VI.—(A.) VII. 24–27.

## SECTION I.—RESUMED DELINEATION OF RIGHTEOUSNESS.

1. IN the first member of the sermon (v. 3–10) our Lord delineates righteousness (See Part I., sect. i.), and here, in the concluding and parallel member (See Intro., sect. ii., par. 2), he resumes the delineation of it. In his delineation of it in the former passage he exhibits it under its different aspects by direct description or specification; but in his resumed delineation of it, in the passage now under consideration, he exhibits it at one view, by an indirect description of it as consisting in practical conformity to the searching and authoritative deliverances with respect to it which he had just uttered—"Whosoever doeth these sayings of mine." Each mode of delineation is evidently adapted to the place which it occupies in the sermon,—the former preceding, and the latter following the discrimination of righteousness with which the sermon is mainly occupied.

2. Here, as in the parallel member, the delineation of righteousness is clearly intended, and effectually serves to expose and correct the reliance on mere outward and relative distinction, apart from personal character and conduct, as sufficient to secure the advantages to be sought in religion, which was then, and alas! has always been, prevalent. In opposition to this reliance, our passage represents the hearing of Christ's sayings to which it refers, and the discipline-

ship founded upon it, as common to some who should be excluded from the blessedness of his kingdom with those who should enjoy it. While he that heareth the sayings in question and doeth them is likened unto a wise man which built his house upon a rock, and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house, and it fell not; every one that heareth them and doeth them not is likened to a foolish man which built his house upon the sand, and the rain descended, and the floods came, and the winds blew, and beat upon that house, and it fell, and great was the fall of it. The hearing of the sayings is a common element in the two cases; it is the doing of them that distinguishes those who are pronounced blessed.—(See Intro., sect. i.)

In our passage Christ claims to be recognised as a sovereign who required obedience to his sayings, and intimates that, whatever resources he possessed and whatever victories he would achieve, he would confer the blessedness of his kingdom upon those alone who rendered the required obedience.—(See Part I., sect. ii., par. 2.)

3. To do the sayings which had just been uttered by our Lord, is, as we conceive our exposition of them has evinced and established, to purify ourselves, in obedience to the prohibitions of the law, from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit (see Part III., sect. i.), and, in obedience to the positive requirements of the law, to perfect holiness in the fear of God (see Part III., sect. ii.), and to lay hold on eternal life (see Part III., sect. iii.) Accordingly, not only those who fall short of outward compliance with them, but those also who stop short at such compliance, do them not.

SECTION II.—ADVANTAGE ATTACHED TO RIGHTEOUSNESS—  
RESUMED STATEMENT.

1. Having already, in the parallel member of the sermon (v. 3–10), set forth in detail the advantage attached to righteousness (Part I., sect. ii., par. 4–12), our Lord here, in the resumed statement of it, only adds that without fail it will be fully realised in the case of each of the righteous, the realization of it forming the necessary and appropriate accompaniment or consequence of the realization of righteousness—"Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine, and doeth them, I will liken him unto a wise man," &c. The wise man that builds his house upon a rock makes adequate provision for his own future accommodation,—such provision as will avail him under the most trying circumstances; and all who practise and cultivate righteousness make analogous provision for eternity—they have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens."—(2 Cor. v. 1.)

2. The advantage attached to righteousness, that its greatness may be the more clearly seen, is presented in contrast with the opposite and only other issue,—the ruin attached to unrighteousness.—(See Intro., sect. ii., par. 2.) That ruin will be total, and none of the unrighteous will escape it. It is the necessary and inevitable consequence of the distinctive procedure of the class or subdivision of the unrighteous with which our Lord particularly deals,—those who hear his sayings but do them not.

SECTION III.—DETAILED EXPOSITION.

VER. 24.—*Therefore*.—The connection is, blessedness awaits the righteous (ver. 21), and the righteous only (ver. 23), "therefore," &c.

*Whosoever heareth these sayings of mine*.—Whosoever

assumeth outwardly the relation of a disciple to me. The hearing intended comprehends the enjoyment of a privilege and the performance of a duty, for here the one implies the other. The meaning therefore is, Whosoever enjoyeth the outward privilege and performeth the outward duty of hearing, &c.

*And doeth them.*—The *contents* of the “sayings,” or the duties which they enjoin, discriminate, and enforce, are alone regarded in this clause and, generally, in the phraseology which it exemplifies—“doeth them.”

*I will liken him.*—We cannot regard the future here as referring to “that day.” It is to be viewed as an instance of a mode of expression, the origin of which is to be found in cases that involved uncertainty and required deliberation. In such a case there would be a present conscious purpose, say, to “liken,” but the execution of this purpose, being in the meantime impracticable, could be spoken of only as future—“I will liken;” or, rather, the question would arise with respect to the execution of it, To whom or to what shall I liken? (Matt. xi. 16; Mark iv. 30; Luke xiii. 18), and the declaration of the execution of it would thus assume the form of an answer to this question—“I will liken.” This mode of expression, thus originated, would be employed in cases generally analogous, though not actually characterised by uncertainty and a necessity for deliberation. Our Lord employs it in accommodation to the usage of *human* language, as moulded by the conditions of *human* knowledge and determination. Thus the force of the language before us is, proceeding to indicate the position and prospects of him, whosoever he be, who heareth, &c., I will liken him, &c.

*A wise man.*—Practical wisdom is intended, comprehending the right sympathies and the right procedure, as well as the right judgment—the use of the right means, as well as the choice of the right end.

*His house.*—Not *a* house, but “*his* house”—the house in which he dwelt. The comparison respects the provision made for the future in the cases compared. In the illustrative case, the “wise man” made provision for the future,—he “built his house;” he made provision for it in full adaptation to circumstances,—he built it “on a rock,” that it might not fall when the rain, and the floods, and the winds should beat upon it; he made adequate and effectual provision for it,—his house “fell not.” And what the illustration is intended to present is, that, in like manner, in the illustrated case, he that heareth Christ’s sayings and doeth them, makes provision for the future—for eternity,—makes provision for it in full adaptation to circumstances,—makes adequate and effectual provision for it. These are the points to which the illustration applies. The particular manner of making suitable and adequate provision, and the particular circumstances to be dealt with, in the illustrative case, are not to be regarded as forming points of comparison.

*Beat upon that house.*—These words seem to have a “common reference” \* to the three preceding clauses. This peculiarity of connection may be thus exhibited :—

|                         |                             |
|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
| And the rain descended, | } And beat upon that house. |
| And the floods came,    |                             |
| And the winds blew,     |                             |

It in no way militates against this view of the connection that the verb rendered *beat upon* is plural, while the noun in the first of the three clauses is singular. The verb received its number either from the immediately preceding clause, or from the plurality of agents before the mind when it was uttered. Luke distinctly states that the “stream,” or “the floods” of the second clause, beat upon the house.—(vi. 48.)

*For it was founded upon a rock.*—Under the circumstances,

\* See Boys’s “*Tactica Sacra*.”

it could not but have fallen otherwise. Here is seen the wisdom of having built it upon a rock.

VER. 26.—*Shall be likened*.—Perhaps this form is used, instead of “I will liken him,” to intimate, that the view which he proceeds to present should be presented as the authoritative and unchallengeable judgment in the case. If he said, “I will liken,” some might not recognise the justice and validity of the deliverance; but he says, “shall be likened,”—the proper authority will pronounce, and will pronounce thus.

VER. 27.—*Great was the fall of it*.—The issue was emphatically and without mitigation disastrous. In this appeared the folly of having built upon the sand. Of whatever palliation this procedure might admit, if the case were such that the loss in any event would be inconsiderable, it admitted of none in the case actually described.

VER. 28.—*These sayings*.—The sayings reported in the preceding context (v. 3-vii. 27.) This phraseology is evidently inconsistent with the theory that Matthew introduced into his report matter not originally contained in the sermon.—(See Intro., sect. iii., par. 18.)

*They were astonished at his doctrine*.—It is evident, from the cause of their astonishment assigned in the next verse, that it was not so much the matter of “his doctrine” that struck them, as the spirit and tone of his teaching, which, impressive and remarkable in themselves, were entirely new to them.

VER. 29.—*He taught them as one having authority*.—In this as in every respect “he taught” in the spirit of his office. His office invested him with “authority,” and his teaching was in full accordance with this fact. It issued also from the clearest knowledge and the fullest appreciation of the entire case under treatment, and of the truth as bearing upon it—from thorough conviction and earnestness; and he that proclaims the truth from such conviction and with such earnestness, proclaims it with a degree of authority proportionate to the force of his character.

## THE SERMON ON THE MOUNT AS AN EXAMPLE OF PREACHING.

• From the comprehensive character of the sermon on the mount, and from the fulness with which it is reported, it would be interesting and instructive to consider it as an example of preaching. At present, however, we shall only request attention to the fact, that, throughout this discourse, it was our Lord's great aim to undeceive his hearers, who were disposed to rely on the merely outward in religious service and privilege, as constituting them subjects of the kingdom of heaven, or proving them to be such. With this view, he distinctly and emphatically announced to them, that without righteousness—the righteousness of personal character—they should in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven. This announcement, however, was not sufficient for his purpose, for self-deceivers are very tenacious of their delusive peace. If he proceeded no further, and even though in general terms he represented the righteousness of which he asserted the necessity, as exceeding that of the scribes and Pharisees, his hearers would easily persuade themselves that they possessed it, or that by greater strictness or additional services they could speedily attain to it. It is at this point that self-deception is to be particularly apprehended. Those who practise it will admit the necessity of righteousness, and even of a high degree of righteousness; they may go any length short of purity of heart and motive. Our Lord, therefore, described and discriminated the true righteousness in detail and in its whole interest, giving special prominence to the dispositions, affections, and aims, in which it is realised within the sphere of the inward character, as its distinctive and fundamental elements. To this description and discrimination of it the whole body of the sermon is devoted.—(See Part I., sect. i., par. 1, 3-8; Part III., sect. i., par. 1, 3-5, 7, 9, 11, 14; sect. ii., par. 1, 3-6, 9; sect. iii., par. 1-4; sect. iv., par. 1-4.)

Here, it may be observed, we have the highest authority, —the authority of the Master's own example,—for what has been called subjective preaching, and this authority for even giving it precedence so far as self-deception obtains. Self-deception must be dissipated that the gospel offer may be accepted, and that the life of faith may be led; and to dissipate it our Lord had recourse, and his servants must have recourse, to subjective preaching. Objective preaching, indeed,—full and copious objective preaching,—is not only essential to the integrity, but is the great distinctive element of the preaching of the gospel; and if hearers had already a just sense of their spiritual state, and were in no danger of deceiving themselves, it might perhaps constitute almost the entire preaching of it. But our Lord's example teaches us, and it is evident from the nature of the case, that, while self-deception obtains, and so far as it obtains, subjective preaching is necessary.

Self-deceivers persuade themselves that they are already partakers or heirs of the blessings offered to them; or, if they have not deliberately and consciously adopted, they feel and proceed as if they entertained this view of their state, or, at least, the view,—meddling less with the present, and having reference more exclusively to the future,—that their position is such that they shall be admitted into heaven. And, to justify and support their entertainment of this view, they may appeal, and in their own bosoms at least they will appeal, to their faith, to their public and private religious services, to the part, perhaps the prominent part, they take in the efforts and enterprises of the church, and to their consistent or even exemplary walk; and, in multitudes of cases, they have the faith, they perform the services, they take the part in the operations of the church, and they maintain the walk, to which they thus appeal. Still, they are self-deceivers; and how are they to be undeceived? They themselves traverse the whole external

field, and bring facts from every part of it which go to prove, so far as they afford proof in the case, that they *are*, as they regard themselves, citizens of the kingdom of heaven. No course, therefore, is open but to resort to the internal field, and, by the requisite investigation there, to show that the facts on which they rely are not expressions and embodiments of the proper dispositions and exercises of soul, and are therefore fallacious. But self-deceivers, in collecting their proofs, by no means restrict themselves to the external field; they adduce also internal facts,—facts supplied by their inward experience. And when they adduce such facts, adducing at the same time the external facts already indicated, it becomes necessary, in dealing with their case, to analyse the experience to which they appeal, and to apply to it the proper Scripture tests, that its true character may be detected, and that it may be thus evidenced that, not at all such as they regard and represent it, it affords no support to the conclusion which they found upon it.

We have hitherto viewed self-deception as affecting men's dealing with the momentous question of their personal interest in the blessings of salvation,—the question of their actual possession of them or title to them; but it affects also their dealing with the still more fundamental question of their ability to take possession of those blessings. Salvation has been procured for sinners, and is freely offered to them; they are called upon, exhorted, and commanded to receive it. In view of this great and glorious fact, the question arises, —and it arises not as a question of mere speculation, but with an immediate practical reference,—are sinners able to receive, in their own strength, or with such ordinary aid as is given to them under the dispensation of gospel ordinances, the salvation offered to them?

To this question, the answer suggested by the consciousness which men have, that, while it is by faith that salvation is received, they can exercise faith,—as they certainly can

some kind of faith,—is too often returned. By those, indeed, who have not been savingly taught by the Spirit, it is always returned,—if we listen to the language of their hearts, and not to that of their understandings only. And those by whom it is returned, proceeding upon the view which it expresses, either receive salvation as they are able to receive it, and rest satisfied that all is well ; or, unwilling to be at present embarrassed with its claims and requirements, defer the reception of it, intending, as they can receive it at any time, to receive it at a more convenient season. Those kindred forms of self-deception, which must be ruinous to the souls in which they continue to obtain, are unquestionably very prevalent, and how are they to be dealt with ? It is, of course, undeniable that men in their natural state can exercise faith, and, when multitudes in their natural state regard the faith which they can and do exercise as saving faith, is it not necessary, if we would undeceive them, that we unfold the nature of saving faith, and thus discover to them that it is radically different from the faith on which they rely ? Saving faith, indeed, may be known by its operation and fruits, but we cannot discriminate even its fruits without describing the affections and inward exercises from which they derive their character and flavour. And must not the same or a similar course be followed in dealing with those who, in their great blindness, persuade themselves that they can, in their own strength, and at their own time, exercise saving faith and do whatsoever else may be necessary to secure their salvation ?

Inability to exercise saving faith, and to appropriate salvation, is, however, but one element or result of the total depravity with which men are affected in their natural state ; and self-deception prevails with respect to that depravity in its whole extent and as regards the whole of its operation. The prevalence of it over so wide a range is maintained, and plausibility and power are imparted to it as thus prevailing,

by the fact that over against spiritual acts, such as saving faith and repentance unto life, there are natural acts of the same general character, and that bear the same name.—(See on “Saith unto me, Lord, Lord,” pp. 270, 271.) And men in their natural state, wholly ignoring the former, regard the requirements respecting them as requirements respecting the latter, and, therefore, as requirements with which they are themselves able to comply. Hence, in their own estimation, they are neither weak nor wicked, as they are represented to be, and as they are in reality. They look upon themselves as persons who can believe, and repent, and pray, and, in a word, serve God, not, indeed, perfectly as the covenant of works required, but still to such an extent that the service they render will be accepted, and will prove sufficient for them, under the covenant of grace. From this enormous deception which they practise upon themselves, it follows, as a necessary consequence, that they do not recognise the necessity of regeneration, or of the efficacious grace of the Spirit as to any of its effects;—and they shall not be visited with a saving operation of which they do not recognise the necessity.

Now, in dealing with such, is it not necessary to discover to them, by describing, on the one hand, the spiritual acts to which salvation is attached, and, on the other, the corresponding natural acts on which they rely, that the former are essentially different from the latter,—and further, that the state of their hearts is such, that they not only are unable to perform the spiritual acts in question, but are wholly averse from the performance of them, and prone to the opposite activity, the aversion and the proneness being such as cannot be overcome otherwise than by the “exceeding greatness of the Spirit’s power,” exerted in regeneration?

Subjective preaching forms also an essential part of the proper treatment of the regenerate.

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“One great end of preaching is, distinctly to trace the line of demarcation between the Church and the world. . . . There can be no more amalgamation between them than between light and darkness,—between Christ and Belial. Nor is there any greater delusion for the consciences of the unconverted, or greater perplexity to the sincere but unintelligent Christian, than an indiscriminate application of the Gospel to them both in one general mass. Nor, again, is the bold tracing of this broad line sufficient for our purpose. To many who would not dispute its correctness, it would bring no conviction. . . . The sweeping terms of saint and sinner bring no intelligible discrimination, without due regard to the spiritual characteristics of each division in their more circumstantial delineation. It is only by this minute accuracy that each . . . will be brought to stand on his own side of the line laid open before him. Misconception, indistinctness, or indecision, greatly encourages the self-deceiving of the heart on the one side, and the scrupulosity of unbelief on the other,—two serious hindrances to the spiritual welfare of our people.

Nor is it less important to separate between the professing and the true Church. . . . Every part of the Christian character has its counterfeit. . . . Brainerd, than whom no man had a clearer insight into counterfeit religion, . . . emphatically enforced the importance of this discrimination upon a probationer for the ministry. ‘Labour,’ said he, ‘to distinguish clearly upon experiences and affections in religion, that you may make a difference between the gold and the shining dross. I say, labour here, if ever you would be a useful minister of Christ.’ We would remark upon the importance of giving vital and distinctive marks of the Christian character yet in a state of imperfection. . . . We must also regard the different individualities of profession within the Church.”—(Bridges on the Christian Ministry, 7th ed. pp. 277–279.)

The press having been corrected amidst the distraction of other duties, some errata, it is regretted, escaped notice.

Page 34, line 21, *for* "illustrative," *read* "illustration."

" 90, ,, 14, *for* "persecuted," *read* "persecute."

" 97, " 30, *for* "is," *read* "are."

" 129, " 17, *for* "in that," *read* "and that."

" 229, " 25, *after* "regard," *insert* "to."

" 237, " 4, *for* "beam," *read* "mote."

" 237, " 33, *after* "refer," *insert* "it."







